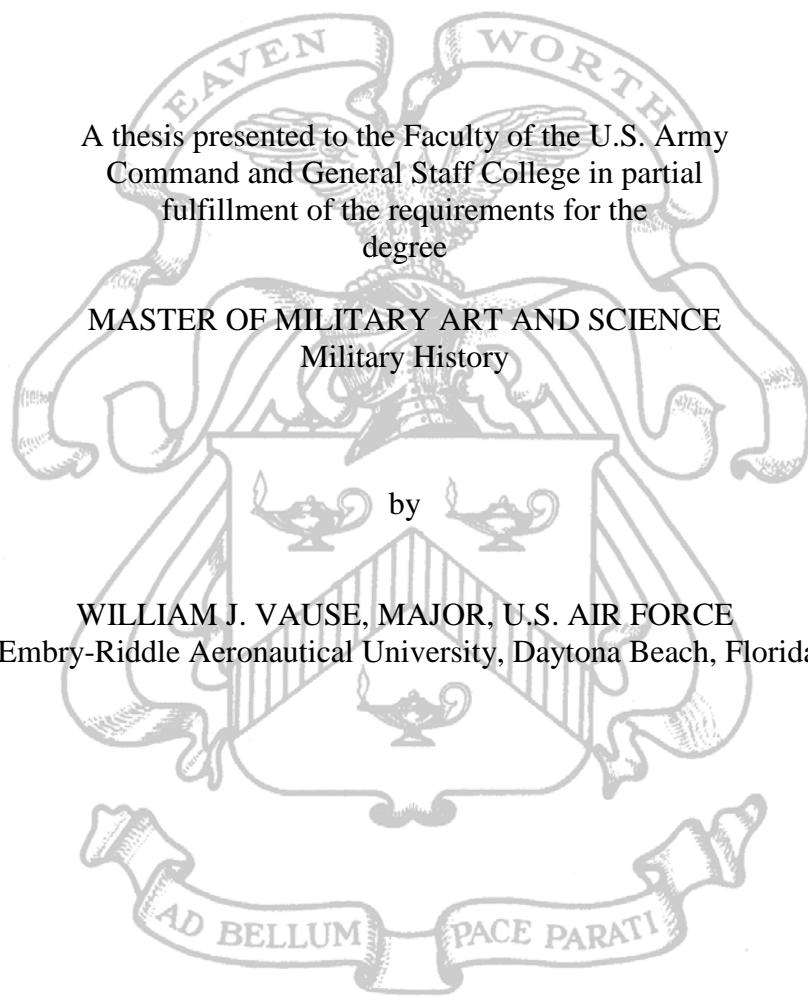


FAR EAST AIR FORCES' CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE RETAKING OF THE
PHILIPPINES, 1944-1945



Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2014-01

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>
<p>Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</p>				
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 13-06-2014	2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis	3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AUG 2013 – JUN 2014		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Far East Air Forces' Contributions in the Retaking of the Philippines, 1944-1945		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
		5b. GRANT NUMBER		
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Major William J. Vause, U.S. Air Force		5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
		5e. TASK NUMBER		
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301		8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited				
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
<p>14. ABSTRACT In 1941, the Far East Air Force (FEAF) was activated in support of Operation Philippines-Luzon-Unaccompanied-Manila (PLUM). Their mission was to deter Japanese aggression by presence and, if ordered, conduct offensive operations against the Japanese. However, following the attacks on Clark Airfield, the FEAF lost 50 percent of their aircraft in a single day. Two weeks later, the remaining offensive aircraft retreated to Australia unable to deter the Japanese.</p> <p>Under the new leadership of General George Kenney, the FEAF turned their retreat into a offense supporting General Douglas MacArthur's "triphilious concept." By September 1944, the FEAF was striking the Japanese on the Philippines. The research question presented in this thesis is, how effective was the FEAF in shaping and supporting ground operations in the retaking of the Philippines in 1944? Air superiority is a requirement in any area of responsibility; however, the thesis focuses on shaping and supporting operations by means of counterland and airlift operations, both direct and indirect. The thesis is taken from a operational lens and compares the operations on Leyte and Luzon up until March 1945. The secondary question compares the historical significant of Kenney's operations with today's land based aviation challenges in the Pacific.</p>				
15. SUBJECT TERMS 5th Air Force, 13th Air Force, General Kenney, Close Air Support, Air Interdiction, Airland Operations				
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: a. REPORT (U)		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 87	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON 19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)
Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98) <i>Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18</i>				

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Major William J. Vause

Thesis Title: Far East Air Forces' Contributions in the Retaking of the Philippines,
1944-1945

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
John M. Curatola, Ph. D.

_____, Member
LTC Andrew P. Creel, M.A.

_____, Member
Lt Col Michael A. Reschke, M.S.

Accepted this 13th day of June 2014 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

FAR EAST AIR FORCES' CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE RETAKING OF THE PHILIPPINES, 1944-1945, by Major William J. Vause, 87 pages.

In 1941, the Far East Air Force (FEAF) was activated in support of Operation Philippines-Luzon-Unaccompanied-Manila (Plum). The mission was to deter Japanese aggression by presence and, if ordered, conduct offensive operations against the Japanese. However, following the attacks on Clark Airfield, the FEAF lost 50 percent of their aircraft in a single day. Two weeks later, the remaining offensive aircraft retreated to Australia, unable to deter the Japanese.

Under the new leadership of General George Kenney, the FEAF turned their retreat into a offense supporting General Douglas MacArthur's "triphibious concept." By September 1944, the FEAF was striking the Japanese on the Philippines. The research question presented in this thesis is, how effective the FEAF was in shaping and supporting ground operations in the retaking of the Philippines in 1944? Air superiority is a requirement in any area of responsibility; however, the thesis focuses on shaping and supporting operations by means of counterland and airlift operations, both direct and indirect. The thesis is taken from a operational lens and compares the operations on Leyte and Luzon up until March 1945. The secondary question compares the historical significant of Kenney's operations with today's land based aviation challenges in the Pacific.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my chair, Dr. John M. Curatola for his direction and leadership during this yearlong undertaking. He constantly kept me on track and provided me with the encouragement needed to balance the needs of Command and General Staff College while trying to complete a history thesis. Second, I would like to thank my readers LTC Andrew P. Creel and Lt Col Michael A. Reschke. LTC Creel provided the joint perspective and doubled as my Senior Staff Advisor during the year while Lt Col Reschke provided the green pen and proper English. Additionally, thanks to the Combined Arms Research Library staff for their support and research assistance. Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Lynette and our children, Jonny, Sylvia, Warren, Marie, Anna, Henry, Nadine, and Claudia. Lynette endured the brunt of my passion, and I am forever indebted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Lieutenant General George Kenney	6
Primary Thesis Question.....	10
Secondary Research Question	10
Organization.....	11
CHAPTER 2 THE PHILIPPINES, 1944	13
Japanese in the Philippines	16
Allied Powers in the Pacific.....	22
Summer 1944	27
CHAPTER 3 FEAF CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES	28
Musketeer II.....	36
Musketeer II Change 1	41
Leyte Operation 20 October 1944	44
Drive to Luzon	50
Luzon	53
Seizing the Initiative at Lingayen Gulf.....	54
Securing the Central Plains and Manila Bay	56
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS	62
Primary Research Question	62
Secondary Research Question	68
TIMELINE.....	71

GLOSSARY	72
BIBLIOGRAPHY	74

ACRONYMS

13 AF	Thirteenth Air Force
5 AF	Fifth Air Force
ACTS	Air Corps Tactical School
AI	Air Interdiction
ALP	Air Liaison Party
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ATF	Air Task Force
BG	Bombardment Group
BS	Bombardment Squadron
C2ISR	Command and Control, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance
CAP	Combat Air Patrol
CAS	Close Air Support
FEAF	Far East Air Forces
FG	Fighter Group
FS	Fighter Squadron
IGH	Imperial General Headquarters
LOC	Lines of Communication
PLUM	Philippines-Luzon-Unaccompanied-Manila
SAP	Support Aircraft Party
TG	Troop Group

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Rainfall and Typhoon Paths, Philippine Islands	15
Figure 2. Situation in the Pacific	18
Figure 3. Pacific Theater Area Commands	23
Figure 4. 5th Air Force Operations in the Pacific.	29
Figure 5. The United States Superimposed on the Southwest Pacific Area.....	31
Figure 6. Japanese and Allied Airfields	34
Figure 7. Musketeer II	38
Figure 8. Sixth Army Plan, 23 September 1944.....	45
Figure 9. Luzon	51
Figure 10. Corregidor Island	59

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

San Marcelino Airfield looked very isolated as the pilots from the 27th Bombardment Group (BG) flew their first B-18 Bolo sortie since deploying to the Philippines.¹ Arriving on Thanksgiving 1941, the pilots had borrowed an aircraft from another BG to regain their flying proficiency after arriving from the States. Their future home looked desolate from above with few amenities. So sparse were the accommodations, that they would later pool money together to rent a house in Manila forming an “Officer’s Club” for the weekends.² The 27th originally deployed from Hunter Field, Georgia in support of Operation PLUM (Philippines-Luzon-Unaccompanied-Manila) as part of the newly formed Far East Air Force (FEAF), established on 16 November 1941.³ The 27th was part of a larger US presence on the Philippines to gain a strategic foothold in the Far East to deter Japanese aggression.⁴

The pilots enjoyed the Far East nightlife and tropical weather while they waited for their fifty-two A-24 bomber aircraft, which were on another convoy across the Pacific

¹Adrian R. Martin and Larry W. Stephenson, *Operation Plum* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 39-44.

²Ibid., 44.

³FEAF referred to the Far East Air Force prior to 1944 and represented air forces in the Philippines, 1941-1942. In 1944, The Far East Air Forces(s) was activated to unify Fifth and Thirtieth Air Force, under one commander. FEAF is used throughout the thesis, however, this refers to different organizations depending on the date.

⁴Louis Morton, *U. S. Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific, The Fall of the Philippines*, special commemorative edition (Minnetonka, MN: National Historical Society, 1995), 39; Martin, 24.

Ocean, three weeks behind the main body of airmen.⁵ On 7 December 1941, the 27th hosted a softball game against the local Manila Polo Team at the luxurious five-star Manila Hotel. Following the game, they enjoyed a party given in honor of Major General Lewis H. Brereton, the FEAF commander.⁶ General Douglas MacArthur, the senior US military commander in the Philippines, handpicked Brereton as his senior air commander; Brereton had arrived on 3 November.⁷ MacArthur believed Brereton would be a contributing force if the Japanese attempted to attack Allied Forces in the Pacific.

Brereton, a small, cocky, and highly intelligent career officer was a decorated pilot in World War I and sixteen years prior, was part of Colonel Billy Mitchell's defense team during Mitchell's court martial.⁸ Arriving just three weeks earlier, Brereton was responsible for the only Allied air force in the Far East, with the exception of carrier-based aviation stationed out of Hawaii. Brereton oversaw 277 aircraft including 74 bombers under the V Bomber Command, 175 fighters under the V Interceptor Command, 5,609 personnel, and the Far East Service Command.⁹ The FEAF, to include the 27th deployed, were to conduct offensive air operations and defend the Philippine coastal frontier if diplomatic efforts with the Japanese failed.¹⁰

⁵William H. Bartsch, *Doomed at the Start, American Pursuit Pilots in the Philippines, 1941-1942* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1992), 4.

⁶Martin, 44.

⁷Morton, 39.

⁸Geoffrey Perret, *Winged Victory, The Army Air Forces in World War II* (New York, NY: Random House, 1993), 177.

⁹Morton, 42, 49.

¹⁰Ibid., 67.

With no airplanes to fly and no permanent living quarters, the pilots focused on enjoying the cool breeze from Manila Bay, admiring the five-star view, and finding a way back to their quarters after a night of drinking. According to the 27 BG transcription dated 1 November to 7 December 1941:

The dinner was given at the Manila Hotel and was really quite a gay affair. Everyone was on their very best drunken behavior and Gen. B. [Brereton] had to keep his eyes on the floor to keep from disciplining the lot. Mangan and Townsend kept making faces at their SQ C.O., Lowery, who sat at the head table with the General. “ZEKE” Summers was giving Hipps hell at the other end, and generally it “was the best entertainment this side of “Minsky’s.”¹¹

However, Brereton’s mind was preoccupied that evening, talking with MacArthur’s staff and fellow commanders about the increased possibility of going to war with the Japanese, instead of relaxing with his fellow Airmen.¹² The War Department notified MacArthur the last week of November that US and Japanese negotiations had failed and “an aggressive move by Japan is expected within the next few days.”¹³ MacArthur immediately expanded air reconnaissance, put crews on full alert, and dispersed forces around the Philippines.¹⁴ However, with no aircraft and no understanding of the seriousness of the Japanese threat, the 27 BG treated 7 December like every other day.

At 2:00 AM the dinner gradually broke up and we felt our way for [Fort William] McKinley. The dawn broke, war broke, we lived from today on,

¹¹G. Wayne Dow, Our Family Treasury: Unit History of the 27th Bombardment Group (Light) U.S. Army Air Corps World War II, 1 January 1940-1 September 1942, <http://lindadow.net/pdffiles/bombgpli.pdf>. 67 (accessed 10 February 2014).

¹²Morton, 72-73.

¹³Ibid., 71-72.

¹⁴Ibid., 71.

tormented with the old, worn-out phrase—"Where in hell are our airplanes?" Somebody made an awful mistake—we all hoped they were paying for it."¹⁵

Shortly after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the 27th commanding officer, Major John "Big Jim" Davies, was notified via phone at 4:30 a.m. ¹⁶ News started to reach the rest of the 27th a few hours later by rumors and public radio; however, without airplanes, permanent facilities, or some proficiency in the area of responsibility (AOR), what military operations could the 27th conduct?

Why the rest of the FEAF did not attack Japanese forces on Formosa on 8 December has widely been debated between MacArthur, Brereton, and MacArthur's Chief of Staff (CoS), Brigadier General Richard K. Sutherland. According to Brereton's diary, he kept his air forces idle, on the ramp and exposed to enemy forces, as he waited for a decision from MacArthur and Sutherland. He asked MacArthur and his staff twice to conduct a counter attack against Japanese forces on Formosa but was denied both times.¹⁷ MacArthur would denounce the account and publicly claim Brereton never approached him to attack Formosa, and that an Allied attack was scheduled on the morning of 9 December.¹⁸ Additionally, according to MacArthur's biography, "I was still under the impression that the Japanese had suffered a major setback at Pearl Harbor, and

¹⁵Dow, 67.

¹⁶Martin, 52.

¹⁷Morton, 81-84.

¹⁸Ibid., 84.

their failure to close in on me supported that belief. I therefore ordered an air reconnaissance mission to the north.”¹⁹

On 8 December, the Japanese 11th Air Fleet attacked Clark Field in the Philippines with little to no opposition and destroyed half of Brereton’s aircraft.²⁰ In the first day of the war, the FEAF was reduced to seventeen B-17 bombers and forty-three P-40 fighters; within four days, the remaining B-17 bombers were flown only to prevent their destruction as they idled on the ground.²¹ The Japanese gained air superiority over the Philippines and on 15 December, the remaining B-17s retrograded 1,500 miles to Darwin, Australia.

Twenty-three pilots of the 27th escaped on 17 and 18 December, taking off in blackout conditions on a bomb-cratered runway.²² MacArthur, by order of the President of the United States, escaped on 12 March, followed by the surrender of Allied forces on the Philippines on 9 June 1942.²³ A majority of the casualties were from those who were never able to leave the Philippines; as a result, they died during the death marches and prison camps. Of the roughly 800 27th members that arrived on Thanksgiving Day 1941, an estimated 30 percent survived the war.²⁴

¹⁹Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 117.

²⁰Morton, 88.

²¹Ibid., 97.

²²Martin, 69.

²³Gordon L. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide, A Geo-Military Study* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 23.

²⁴Martin, 289.

FEAF's leadership and defeat in the Philippines made a lasting impression on MacArthur. Brereton was reassigned to India and eventually commanded Allied Air Forces in the Middle East and Europe; however, he never commanded forces again in the Pacific or for MacArthur. The majority of FEAF Philippine veterans who did escape never fully recovered and were purposefully shipped back to the states due to their low morale.²⁵ Several months later, MacArthur continued to lose faith in his air component commander when he fired Brereton's replacement, Lieutenant General George Brett in July.²⁶ Brett and Sutherland's working relationship was hampered, and MacArthur thought Brett's lack of leadership was blamed for the Allied Air Forces "lack of discipline and fighting spirit."²⁷

Lieutenant General George Kenney

On 4 August, Lieutenant General George Kenney took over the remnants of Brett's air forces and established the Fifth Air Force (5 AF). Kenney was MacArthur's third air commander in less than nine months, and MacArthur needed someone who could work with Sutherland to rebuild the tattered remnants of the FEAF. Luckily, Kenney and Sutherland were classmates at the Army War College in 1933. Kenney was well aware of the CoS's poor perception of airmen dating back to 8 December 1941, whereas Sutherland blamed the fall of the Philippines on the FEAF's inaction during and

²⁵George C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports* (Washington, DC: Office of the Air Force History United States, 1987), 42.

²⁶Ibid., 9.

²⁷Walter J. Boyne, *Clash of Wings, World War II in the Air* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1997), 234.

shortly after the Japanese attacked Luzon.²⁸ He described Sutherland as a hardworking, and arrogant officer whose egotism made him “almost universally disliked.”²⁹ Kenney was very aware of the tattered relationship between MacArthur and the Air Force; additionally, Kenney’s own service was not going to provide the resources necessary to initially defeat the Japanese. General Henry H. Arnold, the Army Air Force Commanding General, told him that Europe would get the priority for resources, airplanes, and airmen. Kenney would have to rely on his own tactical, technical, and operational experience to provide the framework for his success for the rest of the war.³⁰

Kenney’s technical experience was similar to Lt Col Jimmy Doolittle, an aviation pioneer who was the famous commander of the Doolittle raid on Tokyo. Like Doolittle, Kenney graduated from MIT and was an early engineer, student, and test pilot in the then blossoming Air Force. Kenney’s experience and comfort in innovation allowed him to drive experimentation from a Numbered Air Force organizational level without the approval of a manufacturer. This is not to say Kenney did not consult with engineers; in fact, one of the last individuals he conferred with prior to leaving the states was the former president of General Motors, Bill Knudson.³¹

²⁸Kenney, 27.

²⁹Ibid., 26.

³⁰Thomas E. Griffith, Jr., *MacArthur’s Airman* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 42-43. Griffith’s exceptional description of Kenney, in Chapter 3, labeled, “The Sum of His Experiences,” 42-45, was used as a foundation in developing the author’s description of Kenney, 7-9.

³¹Kenney, 13.

Kenney understood he would be seriously limited on resources and needed to understand the capabilities and limitations of wartime production. He also understood his future operating environment and asked for fifty P-38s from Fourth Air Force to be transferred to his AOR.³² The P-38 was not a popular plane because it had established a reputation for killing pilots; and Kenney knew Arnold was not a proponent of the P-38. However, the two-engine fighter would increase the range and firepower of Kenney's attack capabilities, which would allow Kenney to push the tactical ranges of his air operations.

Tactically, Kenney was a combat veteran of World War I as well as a student and instructor of Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS). Equivalent to today's Air Force Weapons School, ACTS was a nine-month advanced air tactics school that familiarized Kenney with advanced concepts like strategic bombing, airborne carrier operations, and attack aviation.³³ Kenney understood the need to continuously refine tactics and modifications of machines. This included the development and experimentation of forward firing cannons on light and medium bombers, and the development of low-level parachute fragmentation bombs Kenney acquired from the War Department.³⁴ Although the Air Corps was focused on high altitude daylight precision bombing, as early as May 1942, low altitude bombing was seen as a potential accurate tactic, as demonstrated by

³²Ibid., 12.

³³Griffith, 25.

³⁴Kenney, 12.

the British in the early part of the war.³⁵ Kenney, along with his aide, Major William Benn, also experimented with low level “skip bombing” on B-17s to combat Japanese merchant shipping. Benn would later be “fired” by Kenney and then commanded the first B-17 squadrons in the AOR to conduct skip bombing with the 63 BS.³⁶

Kenney was one of the first aviation pioneers and many years senior to a majority of airmen in theater; however, what stood Kenney apart was his ability to understand the Army. Kenney’s in-residence studies at the Command and General Staff College and Army War College gave him an appreciation for the ground scheme of maneuver, and exposed Kenney to a common language MacArthur and his staff would need from the FEAF.³⁷ Credibility with Army counterparts, combined with tactical and technical proficiency, gave MacArthur a reason to trust Kenney. After the war, MacArthur spoke of his admiration for Kenney in regard to his “combat leadership, aggressive vision, mastery of air tactics and strategy, and the ability to exact the maximum in-fighting qualities from both men and machine.”³⁸

On 1 September 1944, fifty-seven B-24s from the FEAF made their first daylight strike on the Philippines, attacking three airfields near Davao, almost two and half years

³⁵Joseph Reither, USAF Historical Studies No. 13, “The Development of Tactical Doctrines at AAFSAT (Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics) and AAFTAC (Army Air Forces Tactical Center),” Air Force Historical Library, <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090602-037.pdf> (accessed 12 February 2014).

³⁶James T. Murphy and A. B. Feuer, *Skip Bombing* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1993), 22. In this context, the term “fired” means that Kenney was extremely pleased with Benn’s performance so he promoted him to a command position.

³⁷Griffith, 43.

³⁸MacArthur, 157.

after MacArthur evacuated the Philippines.³⁹ What contributions did the FEAF make to contribute to MacArthur's "I shall return" promise, two and a half years earlier?

Primary Thesis Question

How effective was the FEAF in shaping and supporting ground operations in the retaking of the Philippines in 1944? Air superiority is a requirement in any AOR; however, this thesis focuses on shaping and supporting operations by means of counterland and airlift operations, both direct and indirect. Counterland is broken down into air interdiction (AI) and close air support (CAS). Additionally, airlift contributions, to include airdrop missions, were taken into account.

Secondary Research Question

The secondary question relates to a comparison of the historical significance of Kenney's operations with today's land-based aviation challenges in the Pacific. Initially, the air forces in the Pacific were defeated, and on 15 December 1941, Brereton ordered all remaining offensive bombers to retreat to Australia. Two years, eight months, and seventeen days later, B-25s from Kenney's air forces struck Japanese forces on the Philippines. FEAF's redemption encompassed two years and 3,600 miles, a distance a little less than to flying from the Panama Canal to Vancouver, British Columbia. Similar to 1941, today's air forces are stationed throughout the Pacific acting as a deterrent. What lessons can we derive from FEAF's operations executed in the 1940s that we can use today?

³⁹United States Government, "First Heavy Bomber Strike." *Impact* 2, no. 9 (September 1944): 17.

Organization

This thesis is organized into four chapters: the first consists of the 27th vignette, the primary, and the secondary research question. The second chapter focuses on the topography of the Philippines, Japan's relative position, and the Allied strategy in 1944. The terrain dictated the time and location of offensive operations and severely limited defense options for the defender both on a tactical and a strategic level. The impact of weather on flying operations and the seasons severely constrained operations. In the summer of 1944, unable to secure the Mariana Islands and the majority of the East Indies, the Japanese shifted their strategy to the defense of the mainland, Formosa, and the Philippines. The Allies, on the other hand, were divided in their approach to Japan by inter-service rivalry.

The third chapter focuses on FEAF contributions to three major operations in the retaking of the Philippines: Leyte, Mindoro, and Luzon. Composition, capabilities, and contributions of the FEAF included gaining air superiority; blocking sea lines of communication; neutralizing the Japanese bases; and supporting ground operations.⁴⁰ A majority of the chapter focuses on MacArthur's decision to go to Leyte, air planning and support for the operation, and air contributions during the Leyte operation through December 1944. Leyte was the first time MacArthur deployed forces outside the range of his land-based aircraft, solely using carrier-based aviation. Additionally, chapter three discusses airland and airlift operations in support of ground operations and their other significant air contributions. The FEAF supported the Army's 503rd Infantry Regiment's

⁴⁰The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan* (Military Analysis Division: 1947), 24.

drop at Corregidor along with the 11th Airborne Division's drop at Tagaytay. They also established a Medical Air Evacuation and Service unit, moved tons of cargo and personnel with transports, and airdropped supplies to guerrilla fighters in the Philippines.⁴¹

Chapter four answers the primary and secondary research questions: How effective was the FEAF in shaping and supporting ground operations in the retaking of the Philippines in 1944, and does employment of airpower in the Southwest Pacific in 1944 have any affect on the way the United States would employ land-based aviation in the same AOR in the future?

A literature review is not included in this thesis, however, primary sources are used to the maximum extent possible. General MacArthur's, Kenney's, and other General Officer biographies are compared and contrasted based on what was and was not written, and when the biography was compiled. Furthermore, the official Army, Navy, and Army Air Force's historical accounts were used extensively throughout. Joe Taylor's comprehensive reports written in 1955 provided the level of detail for close air support. All of these resources told a particular story; however, this thesis attempts to accurately depict the contributions of the Far East Air Forces to the ground commander.

Lastly, this thesis does not encompass every major operation in the Philippines; rather, it focuses on the operational level of FEAF operations at Leyte and Luzon up until February 1945. After this date, Allies seized key terrain, and the Japanese were unable to provide a strong counteroffensive capability on the Philippines.

⁴¹Ibid., 85-86.

CHAPTER 2

THE PHILIPPINES, 1944

Within 1,600 miles of Tokyo and within range of the majority of Allied long-range bombers during World War II, the Philippines are a collection of 7,100 islands approximately 500 miles off the southeast coast of Asia and Formosa (the modern-day country of Taiwan).⁴² More importantly to both the Allied and Japanese forces, this island chain is located in the heart of the Far East, and was inhabited by a population of 16 million (consisting of 9,000 Americans), is central in relation to Netherlands Indies, China, Burma, French Indochina, and protects the southern flank of Japan's mainland.⁴³

As the second largest archipelago in the world, the Philippines would stretch from the Great Lakes to Florida and from Virginia to Arkansas if overlaid on the United States—1,150 miles north to south and 700 miles east to west.⁴⁴ The Philippine coastline is equal to the United States and has a total landmass of 114,000 square miles.⁴⁵ Numerous beaches are ideal for amphibious operations, and because of its large coastline and relative position to other landmasses, would be virtually impossible to defend against an

⁴²John A. Weeks, "Study of the Military Geography of the Philippine Islands and the Most Suitable Beach-Head and the Route of Advance to the Vital Area for an Overseas Expedition" (Research paper, The Command and General Staff School, 1931), <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll14/id/727> (accessed 3 November 2013).

⁴³Morton, 4; Rottman, 271.

⁴⁴Rottman, 266.

⁴⁵Weeks, 1-4.

invasion.⁴⁶ Located on the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” a majority of the islands have mountain ranges that run north to south with the largest peak just under 10,000 feet. These mountain ranges include low lying areas susceptible to flooding and limit the number and locations of possible airfields.

The Philippines have three seasons: rainy, cool, and hot.⁴⁷ The cool season runs from December to February, followed by the hot season from March to May providing the clearest cloud cover. Figure 1 illustrates the specific seasons depending on the island and highlights that the southeast sides of the Philippines are prone to rain throughout the year. Additionally, projected typhoons’ paths are depicted for operational planning purposes, depending upon the time of year. From an Airman’s perspective, the most important operational factor is the weather during the rainy season, running June to November.⁴⁸ Cloud cover, occasional typhoons, turbulence, and fog are the greatest flying hazards. Large, towering cumulonimbus clouds with bases of 1,500 to 2,000 feet severely limit target identification. Rain showers are present two-thirds of the year, and high humidity degrade maintenance to aircraft and airfields.⁴⁹ Ironically, Leyte’s amphibious landing on 20 Oct 1944 commenced in the heart of the rainy season, and as a

⁴⁶Edward S. Miller, *War Plan ORANGE* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 52.

⁴⁷Ibid., 7.

⁴⁸ The Arctic, Desert and Tropic Information Center, “The Philippines, Their Day of Liberation is Not Far Off,” *Air Force* (October 1944), <http://www.afhso.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110420-030.pdf> (accessed 18 January 2014).

⁴⁹Ibid.

result, Allied forces faced numerous typhoons and thunderstorms during the first few weeks of the operation.

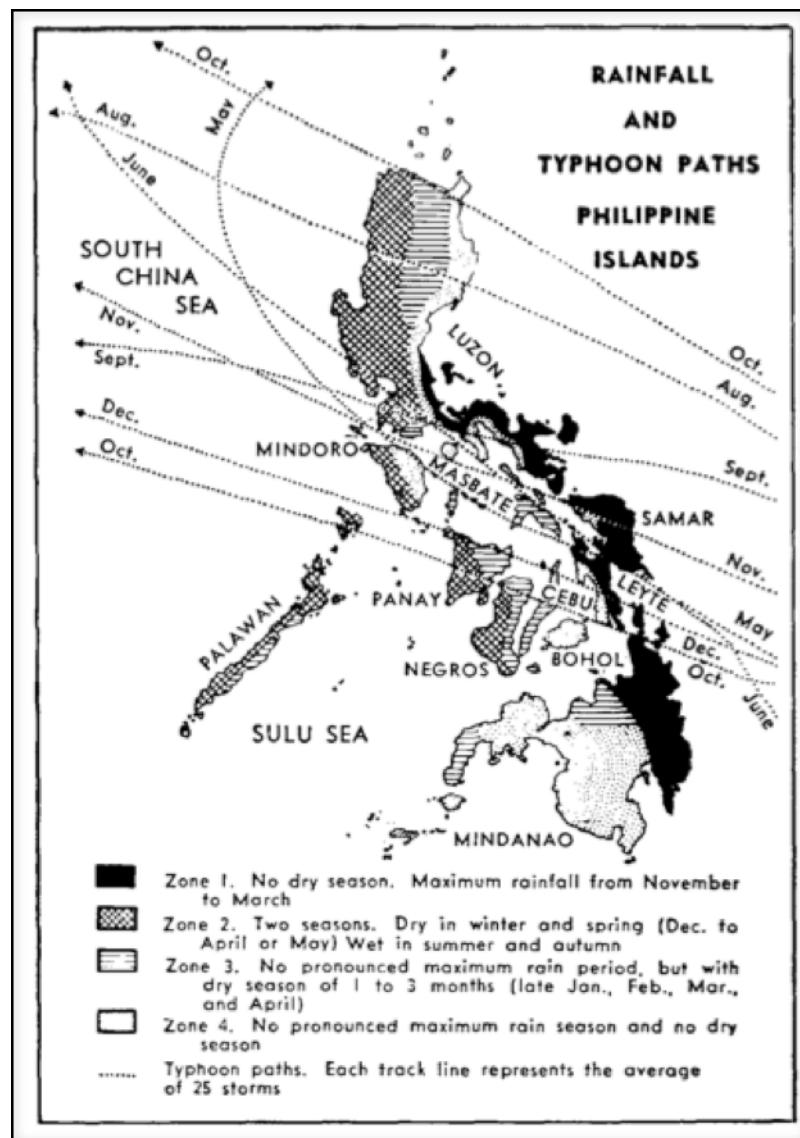


Figure 1. Rainfall and Typhoon Paths, Philippine Islands

Source: The Arctic, Desert and Tropic Information Center, “The Philippines, Their Day of Liberation is Not Far Off,” *Air Force* (October 1944), <http://www.afhso.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110420-030.pdf> (accessed 18 January 2014).

Japanese in the Philippines

World War II began in the Pacific ten years before Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Using their military as a means to an end, Japan leveraged their military to further invade China in 1937 and Russia in 1938.⁵⁰ Japan believed war with the United States could be avoided as long as the United States acknowledged Japan as a world leader and accepted its presence in the Pacific. After the invasion of the French Indies, Japan's position changed when the United States cut off 80 percent of Japan's oil by placing economic sanctions on all of Japan's minerals and oil imports.⁵¹ Following the embargo, Japan believed the United States was a threat to their influence and consequently began making war plans. With Japanese forces in China, Korea, the French Indies, and Indochina, the only geographical terrain they did not occupy near their mainland was the Philippines.

The Philippines were of strategic importance to the Japanese because it allowed the exploitation of rich natural resources, secured the lines of communication (LOCs) to the French Indies, protected the southern flank, and prevented the United States from launching bomber aircraft from its runways. Previous expansions by the Japanese resulted in a seizure of natural resources, and the Philippines were rich in rubber, oil, and jute.⁵² Additionally, the occupation of the Philippines would secure LOCs going to the

⁵⁰United States Military Academy, *The War with Japan Part 1, December 1941 to August 1942* (West Point, NY: USMA, 1950), 1-3.

⁵¹John H. Bradley, Jack W. Dice, and Thomas E. Griess, *The Second World War: Asia and the Pacific* (West Point, N.Y: Department of History, United States Military Academy, 1989), 5; Rottman, 21.

⁵²Mark Harrison, *The Economics of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 242.

French Indies, and the islands acted as a staging base for continued Japanese expansion in Asia. More importantly, the occupation denied Allied forces the use of strategic airfields in Asia capable of striking the Japanese mainland and the military forces deployed around Asia.

In late 1941, Japan decided to attack the United States' center of gravity with two simultaneous blows to the Allied Armed Forces stationed in Hawaii and to the Philippines.⁵³ First, Japan would reduce the immediate American, British, and Dutch military presence in the Far East by attacking Allied military fortifications.⁵⁴ Second, Japan would then protect their southern flank by occupying the Philippines, Celebes, Borneo, the Bismarck Islands, Dutch Timor, and British Malaya.⁵⁵ After the Japanese defeated the Allied Powers on the Philippines, LOCs were secure as far as the French Indies and Indochina while the Japanese occupied the Marianas, Caroline Islands, and Western New Guinea.⁵⁶

After the Allied forces surrendered in 1942 (with the exception of Allied guerilla force attacks), Japanese forces in the Philippines had little resistance from Allied air and naval forces until the summer of 1944. Following MacArthur and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz's advances in early 1944 on Hollandia and the Marianas islands respectfully, Japan's Imperial General Headquarters (IGH) shifted their defensive priority to the

⁵³Saburo Hayashi in collaboration with Alvin D. Coox, *Kogun* (Quantico, VA: The Marine Corps Association, 1959), 25-29.

⁵⁴Hayashi, 31.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Milan Vego, *The Battle for Leyte, 1944 Allied and Japanese Plans, Preparations, and Execution* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 43.

Philippines, Formosa, and Japan proper (figure 2).⁵⁷ IGH redrew the strategic lines of defense from Iwo Jima, Palau, and western New Guinea to the new defensive line, which consisted of the Philippines, Formosa, Okinawa, and the mainland of Japan.⁵⁸



Figure 2. Situation in the Pacific

Source: Robert R. Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1993), 5, <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Triumph/USA-P-Triumph-1.html> (accessed 15 April 2014).

⁵⁷United States Army, *Report of General MacArthur, Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area* (Washington, DC: U.S Government Printing Office, 1966), 309.

⁵⁸Ibid., 308, plate no. 76.

The actual plan for the decisive victory was called *Sho-Go*, or victory, and was broken into basically three plans, dependent on the enemy's axis of advance: the Philippines *Sho-1*, Formosa *Sho-2*, or the mainland *Sho-3* and *Sho-4*.⁵⁹ Because of the location of enemy forces in proximity to Japan proper, decisions for *Sho-Go* were held at the IGH, which centralized decision making to ensure Japanese force allocation at the right time and place.⁶⁰ In theory, the IGH would maneuver forces from the Philippines, Formosa, Borneo, and Japan to maximize their effort and firepower to engage the Allied forces in one decisive operation.

Additionally, the Japanese would engage the enemy through attrition. The Philippines witnessed the first planned *Tokubetsu Kogeki* or *Kamikazi* attack.⁶¹ Originally conceived in 1943, the suicide attack was thought to be a valid tactic to counter the "overwhelming preponderance of Allied power."⁶² These attacks would come in the form of aircraft, human *banzai* charges, or *kaiten* manned torpedos.⁶³ In reality, Japan's decisive battle and war of attrition strategy was an attempt by the Japanese to bring the war to a draw or a close.

With only four months until the anticipated Allied invasion of the Philippines, Lt Gen Shigenori Kuroda, the Japanese 14th Army Commander, began making defensive

⁵⁹Vego, 49.

⁶⁰United States Army, *Report of General MacArthur*, 319.

⁶¹Rottman, 295.

⁶²Robert C. Stern, *Fire from the Sky* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 31.

⁶³Ibid.

preparations with one division and four brigades out of the required fifteen divisions originally planned to execute the *Sho-Go* plan.⁶⁴ The primary responsibility of the defense of the Philippines fell upon the Army, but the IGH tasked navy and air components to complement their ground forces.

Although the IGH tasked the Navy to provide additional manpower toward the defense of the Philippines, the 3d Southern Expeditionary Fleet was already fully engaged with Allied forces adding very little toward the overall defense.⁶⁵ Additional land-based aviation from Manchuria, the Second Air Army, along with the 61st Air Flotilla were reorganized and flown into the Philippines, while the 7th Air Division protected the southern flank of the Philippines.⁶⁶ Severe pilot and aircraft shortages from both the Air Army and Naval aviation limited air capabilities and defense on the Philippines.

By September 1944, reinforcements boosted the Army strength to two field armies consisting of the 14th Area Army and the 35th Army. The 14th Area Army, consisting of four divisions and three brigades stationed on Luzon, were responsible for the northern Philippines. The 35th Army, stationed in Central and the Southern Philippines, consisted of four divisions and a brigade while the Air Army and naval land based aviation reported approximately 1,200 combat aircraft.⁶⁷

⁶⁴United States Army, *Report of General MacArthur*, 309-15.

⁶⁵Ibid., 315.

⁶⁶Ibid., 316.

⁶⁷Ibid., 335; Rottman, 289.

While reevaluating the defense of the Philippines, the Japanese believed air power was imperative and ordered the construction of thirty new airfields, bringing the total number to sixty-eight. Ground commanders believed the Allies would employ airpower the same way they had operated on the Marshalls, Hollandia, and Saipan. First, the Allies used carrier-based aviation to gain air superiority and destroy ground defense positions, followed by a massive ground troop disembarkation on the beaches.⁶⁸ Previously, Japanese air forces took off as soon as reconnaissance forces spotted Allied carriers. The downside of this tactic was that air forces suffered heavy casualties as they engaged the carriers, while Allied amphibious forces suffered minimum losses.⁶⁹

Because of the limited number of Japanese aircraft and pilots, IGH decided it was more important to attack amphibious operations than carriers and issued an Army-Navy Central Agreement assigning target responsibilities. The Agreement, issued on 24 July, held Army land-based aircraft in a defensive posture to target amphibious troop carriers, while naval aviation would target allied carriers.⁷⁰ Additionally, aircraft would commence uncoordinated attacks from small-decentralized locations around numerous airfields.⁷¹ Land-based commanders objected to the new agreement, believing it severely limited their combat capabilities.

⁶⁸United States Army, *Report of General MacArthur*, 319.

⁶⁹Ibid., 320.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

On 9 September, four hundred allied naval aircraft made their first major air strike on the southern island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines.⁷² The Japanese were completely surprised and suffered significant damage to airfields near Davao. Following the attack, Japanese reconnaissance aircraft identified Allied carriers, although the new air tactic limited action against the carriers. On 10 September, IGH alerted commanders to be prepare to execute Operation *Sho-Go*.⁷³ Two days later, another major Allied carrier attack struck airfields near Cebu in the central Philippines. The new Army-Navy Central Agreement was unpopular to land based commanders; however, these new tactics deceived Allied powers into thinking the Japanese air threat was “a hollow shell with weak defenses and skimpy facilities.”⁷⁴ This assessment by Admiral Halsey had serious consequences forty-five days later.

Allied Powers in the Pacific

The Allies foothold in the Pacific was defeated in the Philippines and aggressively retreated to Australia in the spring of 1942. The President personally ordered MacArthur out of the Philippines to Australia. He was to regroup Allied forces, align a coalition with the Australians, Dutch, British, and New Zealanders, then take the fight north to the Japanese.⁷⁵ Washington wanted MacArthur to take the fight to the Japanese, but would

⁷²United States Army, *Report of General MacArthur*, 333.

⁷³Ibid., 343.

⁷⁴E. B. Potter, *Bull Halsey* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1985), 277.

⁷⁵MacArthur, 153.

not give him any additional resources or priority over the European operations.⁷⁶

MacArthur was concerned about the lack of resources and priority of his forces, but was most disappointed in the lack of unity and effort in the Pacific.

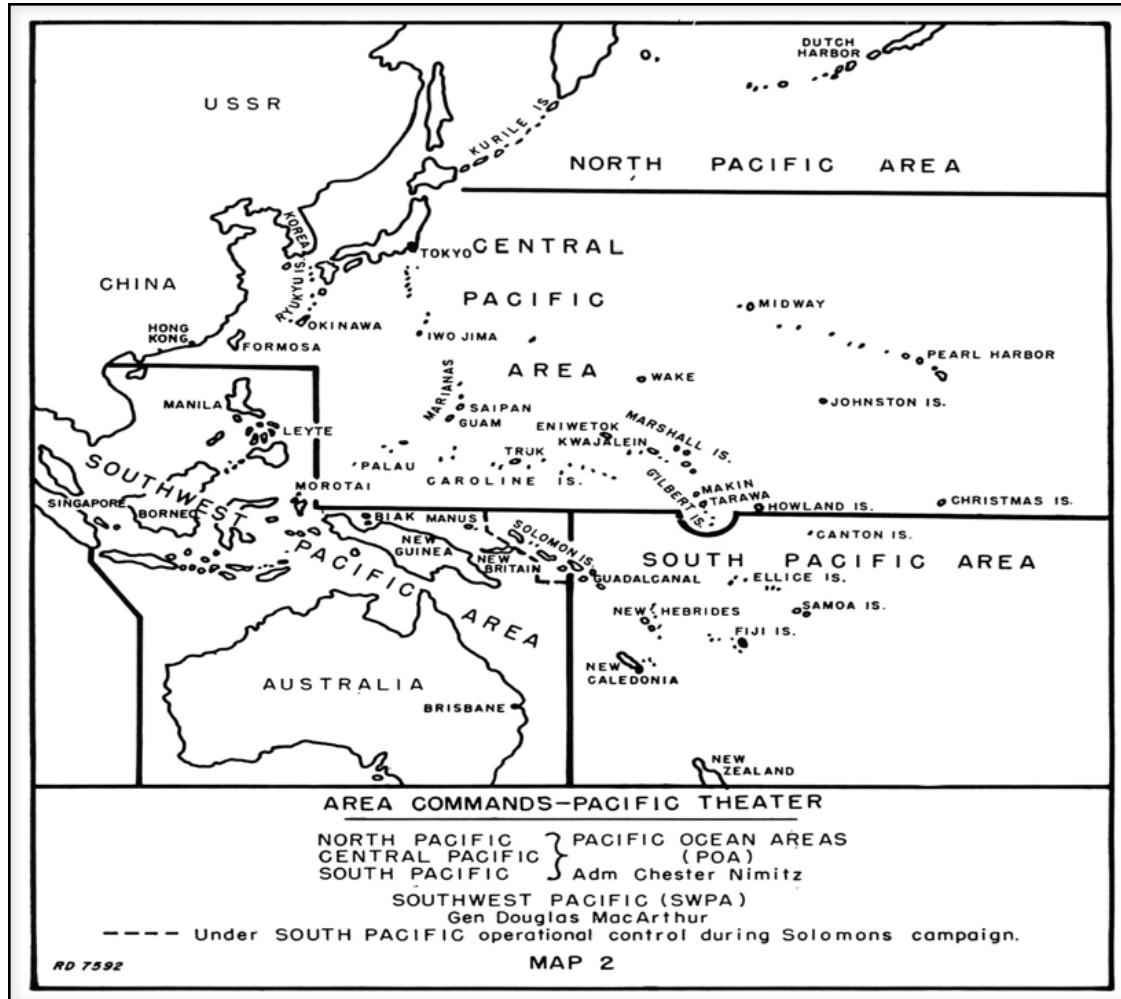


Figure 3. Pacific Theater Area Commands

Source: Charles W. Boggs, Jr. 1944, *Marine Aviation in the Philippines* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), map 2, <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/USMC-M-AvPhil/USMC-M-AvPhil-1.html> (accessed 15 April 2014).

⁷⁶H. P. Willmott, *Empires in the Pacific Balance, Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies to April 1942* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute, 1989), 182.

On 9 March 1942, by order of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the Pacific AOR was divided into four areas: the North Pacific, the Central Pacific, the South Pacific and the Southwest Pacific (figure 3). Admiral Nimitz and his naval forces would be responsible for the North, Central and South Pacific Areas while MacArthur commanded the Southwest Pacific Area and would be responsible for Australia, New Guinea, the Netherlands Indies, Borneo, and the Philippines.⁷⁷

MacArthur's personality and seniority drove him to believe the Pacific effort should not be divided, but instead should be organized under one Allied commander; however Admiral Ernest King, the Commander in Chief, US Fleet, believed the Navy should be responsible for the Pacific. MacArthur later communicated his controversy on the subject.

Admiral King claimed the Pacific as the rightful domain of the Navy; he seemed to regard the operations there as almost his private war; he apparently felt that the only way to remove the blot on the Navy disaster at Pearl Harbor was to have the Navy command a great victory over Japan.⁷⁸

MacArthur believed the larger issue was unity of command and was adamant against dividing the Pacific even between the Navy and his forces, even though MacArthur was two years senior in rank to Nimitz.⁷⁹ Nimitz's forces consisted of the Western Task force led by Admiral Halsey and Admiral Lockwood. Halsey was described as an aggressive and outspoken commander, whose carriers provided air

⁷⁷E. B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis, MD; Naval Institute Press, 1976), 45.

⁷⁸MacArthur, 183.

⁷⁹Ibid., 172.

support during the first five days of retaking of Philippines.⁸⁰ Lockwood commanded every submarine in the Pacific and would be instrumental in sinking Japanese vessels, rescuing over 500 aviators, and providing supplies to Philippines.⁸¹ Although the Departments of the Army and Navy competed for responsibilities in the Pacific, Nimitz and MacArthur maintained a professional relationship.

MacArthur's forces in the Southwest Pacific were comprised of land, sea, and air components. MacArthur's land forces included the First Australian Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Vernon Sturdee; the 6th Army, commanded by the restrained and modest Lieutenant General Walter Krueger; the 8th Army commanded by Lieutenant General Richard Eichelberger; and the Services of Supply, commanded by Brigadier General J. L. Frink.⁸²

The naval component consisted of the 7th Fleet commander under Vice Admiral Thomas Kinkaid. Kenney commanded the air component comprised of Fifth Air Force (5 AF) and Thirteenth Air Force (13 AF). Sutherland continued to be MacArthur's CoS and created hostilities within the Army. Eichelberger addressed personality conflicts the first time he met Sutherland on 30 November 1942, "I had been treated more like a lieutenant than a Lt Gen by the GHQ Chief of Staff [Sutherland]."⁸³ On the other hand, Eichelberger and Kenney were often on the same side of an argument. Kenney even gave

⁸⁰MacArthur, 183.

⁸¹Earnest King, *U.S. Navy at War, 1941-1945* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), 201.

⁸²MacArthur, 170.

⁸³Jay Luvaas, *Dear Miss Em, General Eichelberger's War in the Pacific, 1942-1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), 28.

Eichelberger his own B-17, *Miss Em*, named after Eichelberger's wife, to act as a flying Army command post.⁸⁴ However, Kinkaid and Krueger often communicated their differences with the Air Corps and its support, specifically during the Leyte landings.

By 1943, MacArthur's forces comprised only "2 percent of the total US. Army and Air Force" with his allocated Navy forces in a smaller proportion.⁸⁵ MacArthur's strategy in the Pacific was called the "triphibious concept," described as using coordinated ground, air, and sea operations.⁸⁶ He saw the benefit and flexibility of airpower and continuously attempted to exploit airpower's maneuverability and speed on the battlefield. MacArthur believed in bypassing enemy fortifications and cutting off lines of communication, while seizing key terrain. In order to achieve this, bombers escorted by fighters would bomb enemy strongholds; ground operations would seize key airfields while naval forces would regain sea lines of communication.⁸⁷ MacArthur's triphibious concept was not to be confused with Naval strategy of island hopping, which caused too many casualties and slowed the ultimate victory over Japan.⁸⁸ However, in defense of the Navy, MacArthur controlled long-range land based aircraft while Naval forces operated carrier aviation assets.

⁸⁴Luvaas, 159.

⁸⁵MacArthur, 172.

⁸⁶Ibid., 166.

⁸⁷Ibid., 165-166.

⁸⁸Harrison, 241; MacArthur, 169.

Summer 1944

By the end of the Summer 1944, the approaching Fall brought the Philippines severe weather and an impending Allied invasion. Japanese forces prepared the decisive victory by building additional airfields, increasing military forces, and adopting new defensive tactics. Following the “Great Marianas Turkey Shoot” in the Philippine Sea, Nimitz’s forces were in a geographical position and offensive position to support air operations in the Philippines.⁸⁹ Additionally, with MacArthur’s air forces established on New Guinea, they were in a position to support amphibious landings on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao.

⁸⁹William T. Y'Blood, *Red Storm Setting, the Battle of the Philippine Sea* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1981), 138.

CHAPTER 3

FEAF CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Remnants of the Philippine FEAF, comprised of the newly formed 5 AF were MacArthur's only principle weapon employable until the 32nd Infantry Division (ID) and 41st ID were fully trained and equipped in theater.⁹⁰ Forced to exploit Kenney's application of airpower, MacArthur was unable to utilize any trained ground forces at the beginning of his campaign in 1942. MacArthur's limited ground forces directly contributed to his triphibious concept of integrated air, navy, and land force deployment.⁹¹

Kenney achieved MacArthur's objectives en route to the Philippines by gaining air superiority, isolating enemy forces, and neutralizing enemy bases and capabilities, thus allowing ground commanders to maneuver freely in the AOR (figure 4). Under Kenney's leadership, 5 AF achieved remarkable early success isolating Rabaul and gaining air superiority over New Guinea by cutting off supplies and resources to 147,000 Japanese. Kenney's belief in low altitude bombing led to the spectacular victory in the Battle of the Bismark Sea in March 1943.⁹²

⁹⁰The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan*, 25; Robert R. Palmer, Wiley I. Bell, and William R. Keast, *United States Army in World War II, The Army Ground Forces, The Procurement and training of Ground Combat Troops* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1948), 223-4; Kenney, 32.

⁹¹MacArthur, 166; The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan*, chart 1 of 5.

⁹²Reither, no. 13.

5 AF REPORT OF OPERATIONS OBJECTIVE

To advance Allied Bases and forces to Japanese homeland, destroying or neutralizing enemy war capabilities.

Mission Accomplished in Four Phases*

- Phase I. The Isolation of Rabaul
- Phase II. The Preparations for assault on the Philippines
- Phase III. The Occupation of the Philippines
- Phase IV. The Preparation for final assault on Japan

5 AF Objective Each Phase

To nullify enemy resistance so that Army, Navy, Air Team could take advanced bases.

5 Sub-Phases of Each Phase

- 1. Gain control of Air in each Phase Area
- 2. Blockade of each Phase Area
 - a. Air Reconnaissance of enemy forces, supply lines and military potential.
 - b. External blockade of sea lanes of supply and military potential
 - c. Internal blockade of coastal and land communications between bases.
- 3. Neutralize enemy bases and capabilities
 - a. Destroy enemy potential at selected bases
 - b. Isolate and immobilize all other enemy forces and resources.
- 4. Way open for ground forces to take key positions-Air Action was:
 - a. Air Protection of convoys and Naval Task Forces
 - b. Air support of ground force action
 - c. Air Supply and transportation to advanced bases
- 5. Maintain security in by-passed area by containing air blockade and the neutralization and immobilization of local enemy concentrations.

Figure 4. 5th Air Force Operations in the Pacific.

Source: US Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Fifth Air Force* (Military Analysis Division, 1947), chart #1. The contents and wording remains the same, however the author added the “four phases” taken from the previous pages.

Subordinate to 5 AF and 13 AF, Kenney's forces were administratively organized into a Fighter Command, Bomber Command, Troop Group (TG), Photo Reconnaissance Wing, and Air Service Command, with the majority of focus and resources covering bombardment.⁹³ Commands were administratively responsible for similar groups or squadrons depending on the size and number of resources in the command. For example, Bomber Command would be responsible for light (L), medium (M), and heavy (H) bomb groups while Fighter Command would be responsible for the Fighter Groups consisting of P-38s, P-51s, and P-47s.

As a consequence of the extended lines of communication in the Southwest Pacific between MacArthur's headquarters and tactical objectives, Kenney developed the Air Task Force (ATF). Originally developed in April 1943 by Colonel Fredrick H. Smith, the ATF centralized command authority in support of forward deployed airbases while decentralizing execution. ATFs were given full authority to individually execute missions for single operations that lasted from weeks to several months, while other elements of 5 AF could support MacArthur's long-range planning from Australia.⁹⁴ The ATF was manned by a minimum staff headquarters element, from the 308th, 309th, or 310th Bomb Wings. The modularity of the ATF ensured the right number and mix of resources were

⁹³Maurer Maurer, *Air Force Combat Units of World War II* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961), 8.

⁹⁴The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Thirteenth Air Force in the War Against Japan*, 8; Herbert O. Johansen, "Back to the Philippines Part 1: The GI's Come Through," *Air Force* (December 1944): 7, <http://www.afhso.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110420-030.pdf> (accessed 18 January 2014).

dedicated to a particular mission or task.⁹⁵ The ATFs maintained operational control (OPCON) authority over their forces, while administrative control (ADCON) authority resided with the individual group or squadron's parent units.

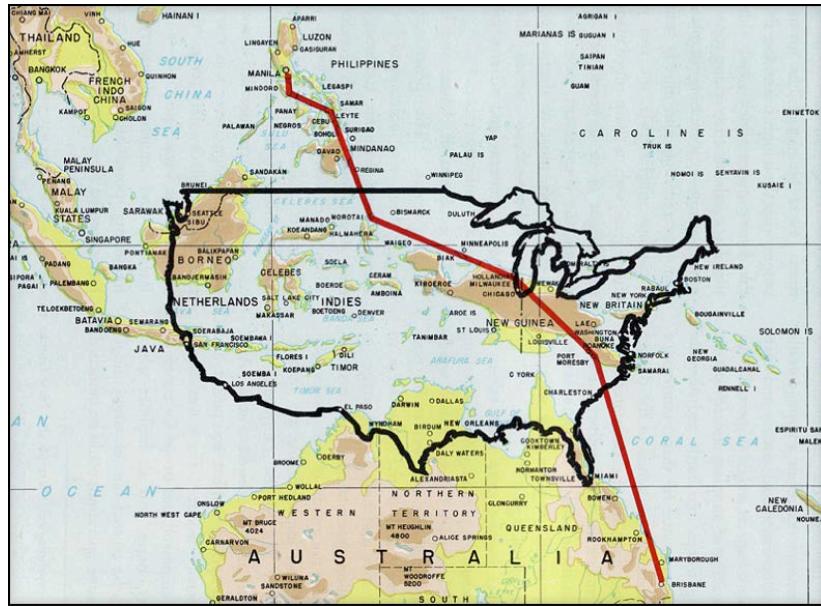


Figure 5. The United States Superimposed on the Southwest Pacific Area

Source: United States Army, *Reports of General MacArthur, The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific, Volume I* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1966), 41, <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/RptsMac A/I/RptsI-2.html> (accessed 15 April 2014).

Conceptually, ATFs facilitated continuous operations while expanding lines of communication in excess of 2,100 miles (see figure 5 for Continental United States

⁹⁵The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Thirteenth Air Force in the War Against Japan*, figure 12.

comparison).⁹⁶ The farthest ATF missions, called “snooper” or reconnaissance missions, consisted of B-24s, B-17 long-range bombers, and carrier aviation from the 7th Fleet tasked with tracking down organized Japanese shipping. Inside the snooper missions, reconnaissance wings flew photo-mapping missions for future operations, while directly supporting air and ground intelligence requirements.⁹⁷ Unlike the European Theater of Operations, intelligence was severely lacking in the Southwest Pacific AOR, forcing ground commanders to rely heavily on airborne reconnaissance to provide locations of troop dispositions. Starting in July, 5 AF nearly tripled reconnaissance sorties; for instance, the 6th Reconnaissance Group, stationed in Biak, flew unescorted photo sorties to Leyte in preparation for the Philippine campaign (figure 6).⁹⁸

As the reconnaissance wings identified future threats, bomber command flew escorted and unescorted raids against airdromes, shipping, and enemy defenses. Designed specifically to destroy and neutralize major Japanese bases while shaping the AOR, escorted and unescorted interdiction bomber missions “advanced the bomber line” approximately 750 miles forward of major ground action.⁹⁹ The bomber line was Kenney’s continuous projection of power closer and closer to Japan. Fighter Command provided air cover, while designated BGs (H) deployed B-24 Liberator bombers with a

⁹⁶The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan*, 19. Graph highlights typical missions of 5 AF.

⁹⁷Ibid., 27.

⁹⁸The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan*, 27; Maurer, 42-43.

⁹⁹The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan*, 31.

4,000 pound payload and 2,100 nautical mile range to fly air interdiction.¹⁰⁰ By August 1944, two heavy bombardment groups within 1,000 nautical miles of Leyte operated out of Owi airfield in the Schouten Islands. Kenney's third heavy bombardment group, stationed with B-25 Mitchell Medium bombers from the 38 BG (M) and 345 BG (M), and A-20 Havocs from the 38 BG (L) and 345 BG (L) operated out of the congested Biak airfield, near Owi.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ *Jane's All the World's Aircraft 1943/4* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1944), 173-174; James F. Sunderman, *World War II in the Air, The Pacific* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1962), 290-294.

¹⁰¹ Maurer, 72, 155.

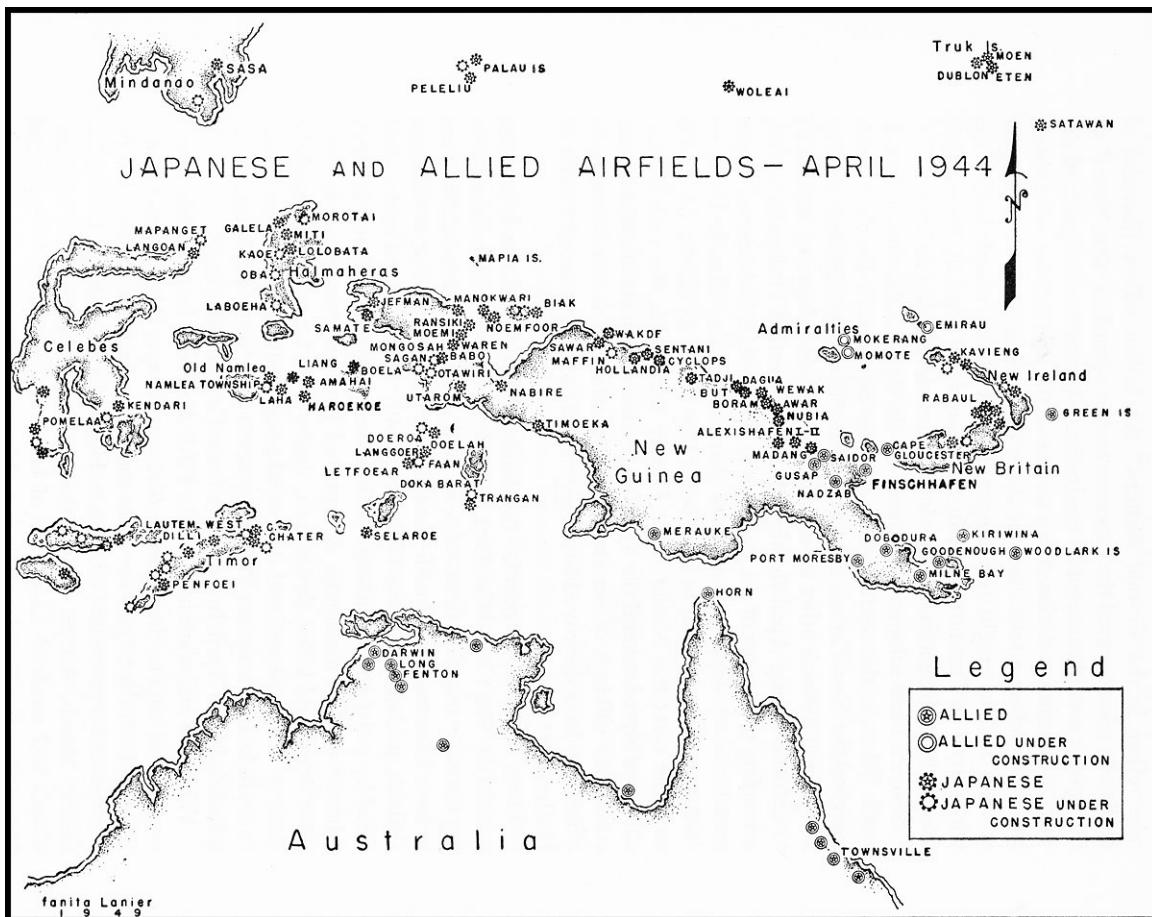


Figure 6. Japanese and Allied Airfields

Source: William F. Craven and James L. Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II, vol. IV: The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1950), 600, <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/AAF/IV/maps/AAF-IV-27.jpg> (accessed 15 April 2014).

The majority of targets in early September were on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, near Davao. Fighters stationed out of Morotai and within 350 miles of Mindanao provided the majority of escort duties for Bomber Command as 5 AF approached the Philippines; additionally, Kenney's fighters were deployed in Biak and Noemfoor.¹⁰² Of interesting note, prior to Charles Lindbergh's visit to the Southwest

¹⁰²Maurer, 46, 89, 108, 122, 226, 348.

Pacific AOR in July 1944, P-38s operated at a distance of 400 miles. Charles Lindbergh, with his extensive experience on fuel management, was able to teach the P-38 FGs how to extend their operational range by managing their fuel mixtures on the engines. Within six weeks, P-38 pilots were flying within a 600 miles radius, increasing their combat range and allowing more loiter time over the target area.¹⁰³ Additionally, the increased range allowed the P-38s to strike new targets and islands farther north of their home bases.¹⁰⁴ While the fighters continued to gain air superiority north, the troop carrier wings supported the 2,100-mile logistical lines of communication.

Kenney relied heavily on the TGs to support his logistical movements, but more importantly to support MacArthur's ground forces. Early on, Kenney used the TGs to gain MacArthur's trust and show airlift's speed and flexibility during the Buna Campaign in 1942.¹⁰⁵ TGs operating a variety of transport aircraft maneuvered forces within the theater, evacuated the wounded from austere fields, and resupplied complete divisions by air.¹⁰⁶ Although the TGs were not forward deployed with the fighters and bombers due to ramp space, they constantly moved men and equipment out of forward deployed locations. By late summer 1944, five TGs, the 317th, 403rd, 374th, 375th and 433rd operated out of Nadzab, Port Moresby, and Hollandia, New Guinea.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³Kenney, 411-413.

¹⁰⁴Bernard Boyan, USAF Historical Studies No. 136, "The Role of the Escort Fighter," Air Force Historical Library, <http://www.afhra.af.mil/studies/numberedusafhistoricalstudies101-150.asp> (accessed 22 February 2014).

¹⁰⁵Kenney, 97.

¹⁰⁶Maurer, 195, 262, 263, 304.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 195, 262, 263, 304.

Musketeer II

On 10 July MacArthur's G-3 supplied Kenney's air staff with Operational Plan Musketeer for retaking the Philippines.¹⁰⁸ MacArthur's intent was to liberate the Philippines and establish secure lodgments on Luzon in order to isolate Japan and support strikes against Japanese forces in the Southwest Pacific and Japan proper. MacArthur envisioned capturing the Philippines through a series of amphibious landings starting in the Southern Philippines. Under the umbrella of Kenney's land-based aviation and with the support of Naval carrier aviation and logistical movement, 6th and 8th Army would secure the major islands of Luzon, Mindanao, Leyte, and Mindoro.

For MacArthur, retaking and establishing FEAF airfields on the islands of the Philippines in order to launch offensive air attacks against the Japanese was always the goal. Supporting amphibious landings by providing air cover and close air support within range of Kenney's fighters was the problem. Kenney continuously attempted to influence ground planners with his views on carrier aviation's limitations, describing it as "so restricted in their time over targets and radius of action that they cannot be expected to neutralize and maintain neutralization of enemy strong points and air installations which would be within range of our objective."¹⁰⁹ Although he acknowledged carriers' contributions, Kenney wanted to ensure land-based aviation contributed the majority of the airpower.

¹⁰⁸William F. Craven and James L. Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. V; *The Pacific: Matherhorn to Nagasaki June 1944 to August 1945* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 281.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

The overall strategic objective for Musketeer was to liberate the Philippines and secure central Luzon in order to prepare for the land invasion for Japan. On 29 August, approximately 75 days prior to the invasion, Musketeer II's plan consisted of four phases: King, Love, Mike, and Victory (figure 7). The first phase, King, consisted of amphibious landing Mindanao, set for 15 November.¹¹⁰ Its mission was to destroy Japanese forces on the southern island and more importantly to secure airdromes. Successfully securing airfields on Mindanao would allow Kenney's fighters and bombers to operate and support future operations on Leyte, Mindoro, and Luzon. Without airfields on Mindanao, Kenney's fighters were in no position to support MacArthur's ground forces. King's second phase consisted of an amphibious assault on Leyte scheduled for 20 December, in order to defeat Japanese forces and establish numerous airfields for Kenney's fighter and bombers. Leyte allowed MacArthur's forces to "leapfrog" to Luzon under the air cover of FEAF.

The second major phase, Love, consisted of a February amphibious landing on Northern Luzon with a sequential airborne assault on the island of Mindoro to further isolate Japanese forces from the mainland. Phase Mike, executed in late February, consisted an amphibious landing at Lingayen Gulf and Dingalan Bay enabling Krueger's forces to seize key terrain in central Luzon north and East of Manila.¹¹¹ The final phase, Victor, would destroy bypassed Japanese forces on the island of Mindanao.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 282.

¹¹¹Ibid., 285.

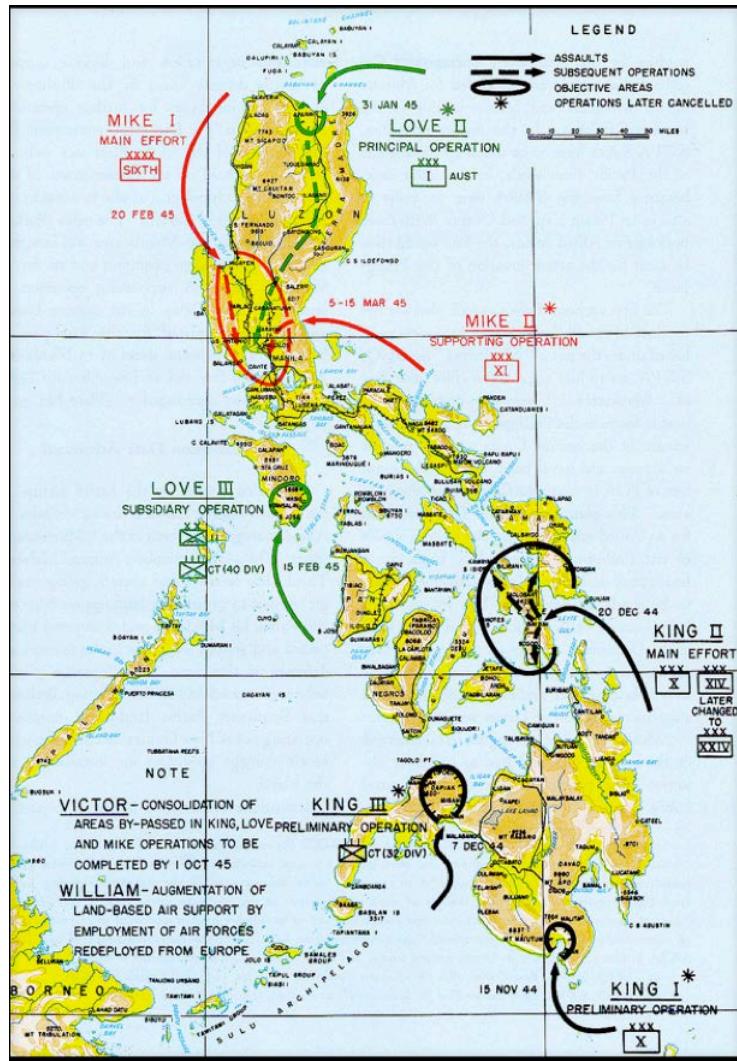


Figure 7. Musketeer II

Source: United States Army, *Reports of General MacArthur, The Campaigns, of MacArthur in the Pacific, Volume I* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1966), plate no. 49, 171.

With planners from the FEAF working out the details for Musketeer, MacArthur tried to persuade President Roosevelt that the Navy should support the Philippine operation and not Admiral King's Formosa assault plan, Operation Causeway. MacArthur felt the plan assumed too much operational risk. Formosa was an additional

500 miles north of Luzon; at no time during the invasion of Formosa could Kenney support MacArthur without establishing some presence on the Philippines. If Allied Forces bypassed the Philippines, Japanese forces on Luzon were still within range of striking Allied Forces.

During a private meeting with Roosevelt and Nimitz in late July at Pearl Harbor, MacArthur tried to sell his plan, Musketeer to the President. "You cannot abandon 17 million loyal Filipino Christians to the Japanese in favor of first liberating Formosa and returning it to China." Additionally, he described 3,700 American prisoners of war suffering in Luzon who would be bypassed in order to free the Chinese.¹¹² MacArthur reiterated to Roosevelt his commitment to both joint operations and assured the president he would give his full commitment to either plan. Without coming to a conclusion, Roosevelt thanked both senior officers and departed. With no decision from Roosevelt or the JCS, Nimitz privately started to favor Musketeer, while King began to limit the size of Causeway.

Meanwhile, Kenney focused on shaping and supporting operations in planning for Musketeer. With a 15 November amphibious assault on Mindanao, Kenney initiated night snooper raids on 5 and 6 August, followed by escorted interdiction sorties against the heavily defended airfields near Davao in early September.¹¹³ With the exception of bad weather on 4 September, BGs (H) targeted airfields on Mindanao from 1 to 6 September while the first BG (M) mission on the Philippines occurred on 6 September,

¹¹²Potter, 318.

¹¹³Craven and Cate, 300.

attacking Buayan airfield.¹¹⁴ During the first two days, FEAF dropped 255 tons of bombs and destroyed 11 Japanese bombers and 27 fighters.¹¹⁵

In order to geographically deconflict carrier operations with land based aircraft, FEAF shifted their main effort on the oilfields of Balikpapan, Indonesia.¹¹⁶ The Balikpapan oil fields supplied 85 percent of Japanese aviation gasoline and 75 percent of their oil.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, Halsey's carriers flew 2,400 hundred sorties over the Philippines on 12 and 13 September, destroying 200 Japanese aircraft while only losing eight.¹¹⁸ On 21 and 22 September, Halsey's forces conducted six raids against airfields on Luzon damaging 405 aircraft and 103 ships.¹¹⁹ While deconflicting from Halsey's forces, Kenney occasionally conducted raids on Mindanao. According to FEAF logs dated 7 October, "B-24's over Mindanao bomb Zamboanga while a P-38 cover hits seaplanes, shipping, and other T/O (targets of opportunity) in the area."¹²⁰ While on 17 October, "In the principle strike of the day almost 60 B-24's hit oil installations, barracks, and shore tgts [targets] on Ilang and N. Davao Bay areas."¹²¹ As MacArthur's forces were making

¹¹⁴Maurer, 439-443.

¹¹⁵Kenney, 421.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 431.

¹¹⁷United States Government, "Balikpapan Oil fields," *Impact* 3, no. 9 (December 1944): 15.

¹¹⁸Potter, *Bull Halsey*, 277.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 278.

¹²⁰Kit Carter and Robert Mueller, *U.S. Army Air Forces in World War II: Combat Chronology 1941-1945* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1973), 468.

¹²¹Carter and Mueller, 476.

their landings on Letye, FEAF focused their heavy bombers on the airfields around Davao.¹²² These efforts would later reveal a “forced withdrawal from at least six of the Japanese airdromes” on Mindanao.¹²³

Additionally, on 1 September, Kenney moved the FEAF headquarters, consisting of 1000 airmen, 2400 miles from Brisbane to Hollandia in less than forty-eight hours with the support of the TGs.¹²⁴ Kenney designated 5 AF to be the main effort supporting the initial retaking of the Philippines, while 13 AF focused their efforts on the bypassed Japanese airfields of Rabaul, Kavieng, and Bougainville.¹²⁵ With fighters in Morotai and bombers in Biak and Owi, Kenney was within range to support Kruger’s 6th Army amphibious landing on Mindanao; however, Kenney’s position of advantage changed dramatically on 15 September, when Halsey recommended MacArthur bypass Mindanao.

Musketeer II Change 1

After 5 AF ceased operations on 6 September, Halsey’s Task Force 38 conducted two major raids on Davao, Mindanao, where they met little resistance from the Japanese.¹²⁶ Furthermore, Halsey was surprised when one of his downed pilots confirmed

¹²²Ibid., 478.

¹²³United States Air Force, *A Prototype JFACC: General George C. Kenney*, Salvatore A. Angelella (Thesis AU, Maxwell AFB, June 1994), 43.

¹²⁴Kenney, 421.

¹²⁵U.S. Army Air Forces, *The 5th Over the Southwest Pacific* (Los Angeles, CA, AAF Publications Company, n/d), 5. The publication does not have any page numbers; taken from the Brief History of the Fifth Air Force Chapter).

¹²⁶Charles W. Boggs, Jr., *Marine Aviation in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), 9.

with local guerillas that there was little Japanese presence on the island of Leyte.¹²⁷ With Roosevelt's Causeway/Musketeer indecision in the back of Halsey's mind, he vigorously advocated cancelling operations against Talauds, Palaus, and Yap, thus diverting all efforts and resources to Leyte.¹²⁸ With concurrence from MacArthur, Nimitz's staff formally requested permission from the Joint Chief of Staff to move up the Leyte operation. Within 90 minutes Leyte was set for 20 October, while Allied landings on Mindanao were cancelled.¹²⁹

Leyte was originally chosen because intelligence assessed Japanese forces to be light, and the island of Leyte was never part of any previous operation plans.¹³⁰ Furthermore, Leyte was geographically positioned in the heart of all of the islands, and with Allied Forces in Mindanao, Kenney could provide air cover without the sole support of Halsey's carrier aviation. Luzon was also within reach of land-based fighters stationed on the airfields of Dulag and Tacloban airfields on Leyte.¹³¹ Ironically, FEAF airfields were still 350 miles from Mindanao and 650 miles from Leyte and in no position to support the amphibious landings; without the capture of forward airfields on Mindanao, 5 AF had limited fighter capabilities in order to support the Leyte operations. Kenney would later write, "I argued that whatever we had been ready to do on October 15 could

¹²⁷Potter, 323.

¹²⁸Ibid., 392.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Rottman, 290.

¹³¹Walter Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon* (Washington, DC: Combat Forces Press, 1953), 187.

now be switched to Leyte, as long as the Navy would take care of the air cover until we could get our land-based air in place.”¹³²

However Kenney might have felt about the decision to go to Leyte with Halsey’s air-cover, Sutherland was the one who made the decision on MacArthur’s behalf. When Halsey asked to move up the date for Leyte and skip Mindanao, MacArthur was under radio silence on board a naval cruiser, and Kenney was forward deployed.¹³³ Although Sutherland was worried about the decision he had made, MacArthur approved and according to Kenney, “He [MacArthur] was way ahead of the most optimistic of us.”¹³⁴ Regardless of the location of Kenney’s forces, Halsey was responsible for the air cover until an Allied airfield on Leyte was established.

Operational Plan 8-44, signed on 27 September by Nimitz, directed Halsey’s forces “to cover and support forces of the Southwest Pacific in order to assist in the seizure and occupation of objectives in the Central Philippines.”¹³⁵ This order was significant because this allowed Pacific Oceans Area forces to be allocated to support MacArthur’s Southwest Pacific Area. Kinkaid’s additional carriers were tasked to support Krueger’s 6th Army amphibious landing. Kenney’s 308 BW, acting as a forward deployed ATF, loaded a naval vessel destined to land on Leyte on A+2. These airmen were responsible for establishing a fighter operations on 25 October or (A+5) and light

¹³²Kenney, 432.

¹³³Kenney, 432; Griffith, 178.

¹³⁴Kenney, 434.

¹³⁵Potter, 395.

bomber operations by (A+15) or 4 November.¹³⁶ With forces in place, Kenney boarded the cruiser Nashville with MacArthur destined for Leyte.¹³⁷

Leyte Operation 20 October 1944

On a clear blue day, after two hours of naval bombardment, the 202,500 troops of 6th Army stormed the 18 mile wide eastern beaches of Leyte against the Japanese 16th Division, consisting of 10,600 soldiers (figure 8).¹³⁸ Meeting with little enemy resistance, X Corps seized the airfield of Tacloban while engineers from the 1st Cavalry Division under the leadership of Major General Mudge immediately began reconstruction of Tacloban airfield. The 1881st Engineer Aviation Battalion efforts along side two Army engineer companies aggressively laid steel matting and filled bomb craters on Tacloban, which would pay off tremendously for the Halsey forces five days later.¹³⁹ As 7th Division seized Dulag airfield two days later (A+2), the First Philippine Assault ATF, under the leadership of Col David W. "Photo" Hutchinson, consisting of 308 BW personnel, landed on White Beach from a Coast Guard LST with 2 L-5 and 1 L-4 crated observation aircraft.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶Craven and Cate, 351.

¹³⁷Kenney, 431.

¹³⁸Rottman, 293; Krueger, 158.

¹³⁹Craven and Cate, 288.

¹⁴⁰Kenney, 450; United States Army Air Corps, *Air Force, the Official Service Journal of the U.S. Army Air Forces* (New York, NY: December 1944), 4.

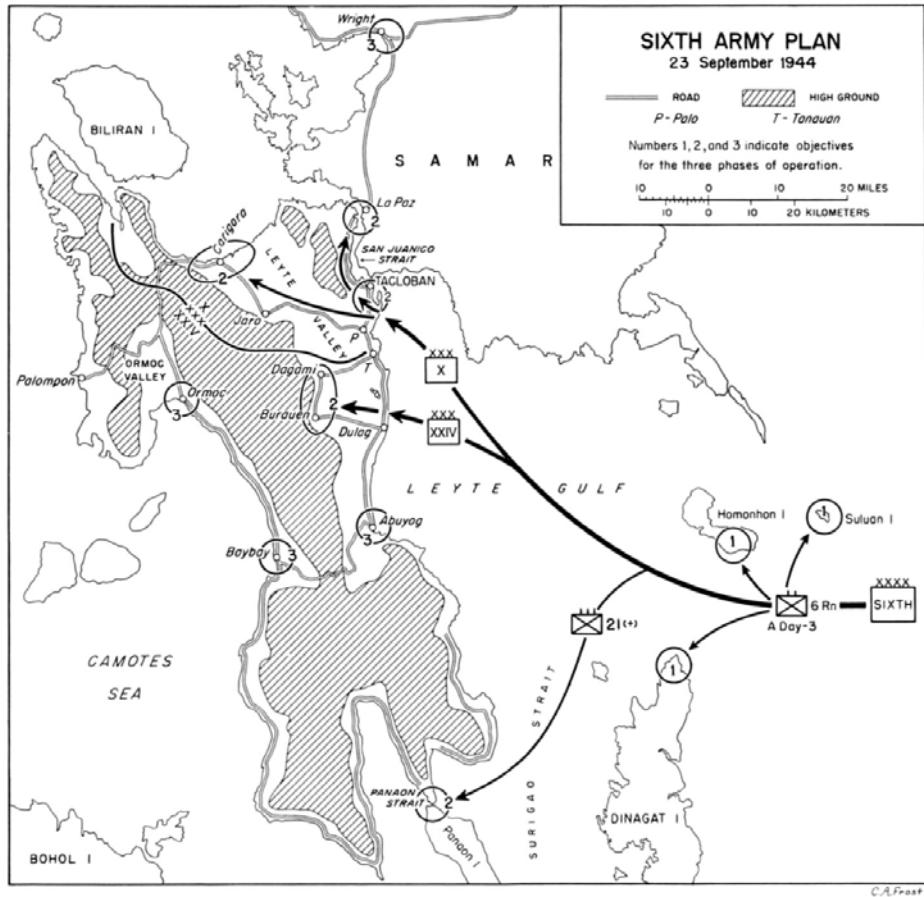


Figure 8. Sixth Army Plan, 23 September 1944

Source: M. H. Cannon, *United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific, Leyte: The Return to the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1993), 32, <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Return/ maps/USA-P-Return-1.jpg> (accessed 15 April 2014).

Working for three days and two nights straight, Hutchinson's forces, which included the EAB, established the only Allied airfield in the Philippines. Three days after the ATF landed, an urgent message passed to the 308 BW, stating Halsey's carriers were under attack off Leyte Gulf and needed an airfield to land on or would have to ditch at

sea.¹⁴¹ The Japanese Imperial Navy launched a decisive battle against Halsey's naval forces covering Leyte, and Halsey's carriers could not support the landings.¹⁴² Within 30 minutes, the ATF set up a portable communications network, and within two hours, 100 aircraft were able to land without ditching.¹⁴³ Additionally, as part of the ATF support of the ground commander, the air liaison party or support aircraft party (SAP) established communication on 24 October with five division and Corps headquarters.¹⁴⁴ The SAPs were responsible for directly coordinating air support for the division and Corp headquarters.

During the first five days on Leyte, Halsey's carriers flew 121 CAS missions, only thirty-three in direct support to the ground commanders.¹⁴⁵ Halsey assigned sixteen fighters and ten fighter-bombers to each division for CAS to provide an excess of air cover against the light Japanese resistance.¹⁴⁶ On 25 October, the Battle for Leyte Gulf consumed naval aviation and forced Halsey's carriers away from the beaches of Leyte; they were then ordered to engage the Japanese Imperial Navy to the north of the beaches.

¹⁴¹Johansen, 4.

¹⁴²John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1989), 556.

¹⁴³Johansen, 4-6.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.; Joe G. Taylor, USAF Historical Studies No. 86, "Close Air Support in the War Against Japan," Air Force Historical Library, <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090601-123.pdf> (accessed 22 February 2014).

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 220.

¹⁴⁶Commander Third Amphibious Force CTF 79, *Report of Leyte Operation, Philippine Islands: Enclosure C*, 13 November 1944, 4.

To protect the carriers and engage the Japanese Fleet, all carrier aviation assets ceased flying operations on Leyte. While Halsey agreed to support MacArthur's land operations on Leyte; destruction of the Japanese Imperial Fleet was a higher priority. Halsey was also operating under the directive, "in case opportunity for destruction of major portion of the enemy fleet offer or can be created, such destruction becomes the primary task."¹⁴⁷

Halsey weighed the benefits of supporting MacArthur versus the operational risk of not destroying the Japanese Imperial Fleet. Halsey decided to shift his weight of effort to the Japanese Imperial Navy, leaving MacArthur without any direct aviation support. Kenney, still not in a position to directly support the ground commanders, assumed the responsibility of close air support. However, Kenney's long range bombers continued to attack naval forces, airfields, and tactical targets in the vicinity of the southern and central Philippines.¹⁴⁸ Halsey, following the victory against the Japanese Navy at Leyte Gulf, maneuvered 3rd Fleet north to replenish at sea and began raids on the island of Luzon.¹⁴⁹

Of note, 5 AF was aware of the Battle for Leyte Gulf, but with little intelligence on friendly and enemy vessel positions, Whitehead would later describe fifty-six B-24s orbiting for the target of opportunity (the Japanese Fleet) as a "glorified combination of 'ring-around-a-rosie.'"¹⁵⁰ Following the Leyte Gulf incident, while the Navy engaged the Japanese, close air support (by default) fell to Kenney's 5 AF, as MacArthur directed and

¹⁴⁷Potter, 395.

¹⁴⁸Carter and Mueller, 478-482.

¹⁴⁹Craven and Cate, 372.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 366.

instructed the Navy to coordinate any air movement in the Philippines with Kenney's staff.¹⁵¹

On Friday 27 October, just before noon, thirty-four P-38s roared overhead from the 49 FG marking the return of the Army Air Corp on the Philippines.¹⁵² These forces immediately established defensive combat air patrols in the vicinity of Tacloban, shooting down twelve of the thirteen Japanese aircraft that flew over Leyte that evening.¹⁵³ The Japanese continued their organized aerial attacks on the Allied fields in the evening and early mornings, flying very little during the day. Hoping to disrupt these Japanese raids, the FEAF converted the 63rd BS, the 868th BS, and the 38th BG from a daylight bombing mission to a night bombing mission.¹⁵⁴

FEAF aerial success continued throughout the next two months; however, with the increased Japanese air presence, the FEAF was unable to support the ground commander until 2 November over Ormoc Bay.¹⁵⁵ Close air support for the Leyte operation was inadequate: "In fact, the first air strike by Army (Air) planes in support of ground troops was not made until 26 November, when four P-40s strafed enemy positions to assist the advance of the 7th Division."¹⁵⁶ However, Kenney's fighters stationed on

¹⁵¹Ibid., 369.

¹⁵²Kenney, 467.

¹⁵³Ibid., 468-469.

¹⁵⁴Joe G. Taylor, USAF Historical Studies No. 92, "Development of Night Air Operations, 1941-1952," Air Force Historical Library, <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090602-012.pdf> (accessed 22 February 2014), 89.

¹⁵⁵Krueger, 194.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

Leyte concentrated on the air threat, while bombers focused on shaping operations. Additionally, Kenney's 5 AF and 13 AF bombers stationed in Morotai flew interdictions sorties over the Philippine islands of Mindanao, Cebu, Palawan, and Visayan in order to support the air campaign over Leyte.¹⁵⁷ Although air superiority was not achieved during the Leyte operation until well into December, these preemptive bombing sorties contributed to the overall Allied effort. Also, members from the 8th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron flew eight missions over Lingayen and Manila in November to provide intelligence in support of future operations.¹⁵⁸

Weather was a serious limitation during the first month of the Leyte operation and continued to be a factor throughout the Philippine campaign; three typhoons hit the landing invasion during the first week and heavy rains caused significant flooding and continuous delays.¹⁵⁹ Besides hampering flying operations, weather limited the number of FEAF fighters and bombers operating from the Philippines.

After it became overwhelmingly clear that the engineer means available simply did not suffice to rehabilitate all of the airdrones, in view of the unsatisfactory soil conditions, poor drainage, wretched access roads and heavy rains (35 inches in 40 days), Fifth Air Force finally consented to abandonment of Buri and San Pablo airstrips. Work on San Pablo strip, on which three engineer battalions and one Seabee battalion had been employed, was accordingly stopped on 23 November and work on Buri ceased on 30 November.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷Craven and Cate, 371.

¹⁵⁸John Stanaway and Bob Rocker, *The Eight Ballers: Eyes of the Fifth Air Force, The 8th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron in World War II* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 1999), 102.

¹⁵⁹Krueger, 193.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

Furthermore, “The detrimental effect of inadequate air support of offensive ground operations was forcibly demonstrated during the Leyte operation.”¹⁶¹ A gross underestimation of the enemy’s commitment occurred on 2 and 9 November, when the Japanese reinforced Leyte with the 26th Division at Ormoc Bay.¹⁶² FEAF’s inability to support the ground commander on Leyte further highlighted the need for an increased Allied air presence. By the end of November, MacArthur asked Halsey for additional air support from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. By 3 December, Marine Aircraft Group 12 flew 66 F4U fighters to Tacloban under the operational control of 308 BW.¹⁶³

Drive to Luzon

Once the airfields on Leyte were established, FEAF’s priority shifted toward the Philippines and away from New Guinea. Planners on Leyte began to focus on their next major phase of operations in the Philippines: the lightly defended Mindoro (Figure 9). With only 1,200 Japanese, Mindoro was strategically located within eight miles of southwest Luzon.¹⁶⁴ Roughly three times the size of Rhode Island, Mindoro climate was relatively dry. Part of phase two, LOVE, Mindoro was originally planned as an airborne operation. However, Leyte’s airfields proved to be inadequate for long range bombers, and because troop carriers were limited, Mindoro’s assault was changed to an amphibious landing.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 194.

¹⁶²Boggs, 26.

¹⁶³Ibid., 31.

¹⁶⁴Rottman, 298.



Figure 9. Luzon

Source: Charles W. Boggs, Jr., 1944, *Marine Aviation in the Philippines* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), 59. <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/USMC-M-AvPhil/USMC-M-AvPhil-3.html> (accessed 15 April 2014).

“The move to Mindoro was one of the boldest during the Pacific War.”¹⁶⁵ FEAF fighters covered the daylight movements while F6F fighters covered the twilight hours.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Samuel Eliot Morison, History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol 13, The Liberation of the Philippines, Luzon, Mindanao, The Visayas, 1944-1945 (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1959), 18.

¹⁶⁶ Craven, 397.

However, terrain and long distances hampered the effectiveness of air cover, allowing *kamikazes* to strike the USS *Nashville* killing Colonel John T. Murtha, the commander of the 310 Bomb Wing along with 275 others.¹⁶⁷

Shaping the Mindoro operation, FEAF bombers conducted major interdiction sorties on 13, 14, and 15 December in the vicinity of Mindanao and the central Philippines, while Halsey's carriers focused on the airfield on Luzon.¹⁶⁸ These sorties reached a climax on 14 December when 81 Allied aircraft destroyed over 100 Japanese aircraft just before the Mindoro landings.¹⁶⁹ Carriers again covered the initial assault landing on 15 December, while FEAF forces neutralized air and naval forces within their range.¹⁷⁰ Although adequate carrier aviation supported the amphibious landings, close air support was not used.¹⁷¹ Landing forces met little resistance and suffered zero casualties from the enemy. Unlike Leyte, "the ground was reported hard and dry and excellent for quick airdrome construction. The engineers were at work on two strips before dark."¹⁷² Three aviation engineer battalions, landed with the initial assault, established Hill and Elmore airfields on schedule.¹⁷³ With Mindoro secured, Kenney moved the 49th FG,

¹⁶⁷Krueger, 205.

¹⁶⁸Kenney, 493.

¹⁶⁹United States Government, "FEAF in the Philippines Campaign," *Impact* 3, no. 3 (March 1945): 41.

¹⁷⁰Krueger, 204.

¹⁷¹Taylor, USAF Historical Studies No. 86, 226.

¹⁷²Kenney, 494.

¹⁷³Craven, 291.

82nd TR, 547th NFS, 25 PS, 3d ERS along with 5 AF headquarters to Mindanao.¹⁷⁴ “By 22 December, there were no longer any worthwhile airdrome targets left south of Luzon” allowing the FEAF to focus on the amphibious landing on Lingayen Gulf.¹⁷⁵

Luzon

After numerous changes, Luzon’s operation consisted of an amphibious landing at Lingayen Gulf, securing the Central Plains of Luzon and Manila Bay area, finally seizing Manila. With the majority of Japanese forces defeated in these areas, MacArthur’s ground forces could focus on cleaning up operations around Luzon. The decisive point on Luzon was establishing a lodgment on the beaches of Lingayen Gulf. Securing the Central plains was critical because Clark Airfield and the network of airfields were within this area. Once these airfields were seized, the Japanese no longer posed a serious threat from the air. Additionally, securing the high ground and entrance to Manila Bay allowed Allied freedom of maneuver and access to the strategic ports near Manila and opened up an additional axis to Manila. Furthermore, seizing Manila allowed forces to control the capital of the Philippines and free the majority of Filipinos and Allied prisoners from the Japanese. Lastly, by controlling the central plains, Manila Bay, and the capitol; the Allies could isolate the Japanese and starve them until they surrendered.

MacArthur’s Musketeer plan was continuously updated while Krueger was ultimately responsible for the planning of Luzon. With little air opposition from the Japanese and substantial FEAF aircraft stationed in Mindanao, the FEAF devoted a

¹⁷⁴Kenney, 497.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

majority of their assets in order to support operations on Luzon.¹⁷⁶ Throughout the Pacific War until the Philippines, MacArthur's ground commanders were responsible for supporting the air campaign.

From Buna through Morotai, ground action in SWPA (South West Pacific Area) and SOPAC (South Pacific Area) had been for all practical purposes in support of the air forces. The drive up the Solomons chain and along the New Guinea coast had been for the purpose of establishing advances air bases which would permit another move forward to establish more air bases. The justification of the campaign had been to permit a return of the Philippines. When that return was affected, the roles of the two arms reversed.¹⁷⁷

Seizing the Initiative at Lingayen Gulf

Although Kenney's fighters continued to deal with the residual Japanese air threat, the FEAF quickly adapted to their new role of supporting the ground commander. With Allied forces still weeks away from landing at Lingayen Gulf, Kenney attacked Japanese airfields in the vicinity of Luzon. From 22 December to 31 December, 5 AF attacked Clark and neighboring airfields five times with two heavy bombardment groups.¹⁷⁸ Attacks on shipping continued and reduced supplies and reinforcements to Luzon while intelligence estimates believed at least one Japanese regiment from each division on Luzon was lost at sea due to Allied efforts.¹⁷⁹

Krueger envisioned Kenney supporting his Army's efforts by isolating the enemy to provide CAS along the forward edge of the battle area and to maneuver resources by air. With Allied landings on Lingayen scheduled for 9 January, Krueger directed:

¹⁷⁶Taylor, USAF Historical Studies No. 86, 227.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 235.

¹⁷⁸Craven, 407.

¹⁷⁹Rottman, 300.

Allied Air Forces was between S minus 5 and S minus 1 to destroy Highway 3 at the Tagudin and San Esteban defiles, respectfully 25 and 50 miles north of San Fernando (La Union), the Claverio defile (40 miles west of Aparri) and the railway bridge east of Calauag (45 miles east of Lucena); to cut the rail and road systems leading south from Manila along Laguna de Bay; and to block Balete Pass (on Highway 5). After S-day was to continue blocking the defiles, so as to deny them to enemy troops.¹⁸⁰

FEAF began planning for the tasking with the exception of out of range targets at Tagudin, San Esteban, and Claverio.¹⁸¹ FEAF bombers conducted air interdiction sorties against railways, roads, and bridges. Within a week after the amphibious landing, 5 AF destroyed 15 key bridges, 76 locomotives and 424 railway cars.¹⁸² 5 AF was so effective that on 19 January, Krueger asked for no bridges or locomotives to be struck unless approved by the ground commander.¹⁸³ With the organized Japanese air attack eliminated soon after the invasion of Luzon, FEAF fighters were able to focus on supporting the ground commander.¹⁸⁴

Organizationally, each ATF supported a number Corp: 308th BW supported I Corps, 309th BW supported XI Corps, and 310th BW supported XIV Corps.¹⁸⁵ With the 308th BW acting as the lead ATF, they initially handled all of the Corps' CAS requests. Additionally, 5 AF supplied twelve SAPs consisting of two rated officers, and twenty

¹⁸⁰Krueger, 214.

¹⁸¹Craven and Cate, 406.

¹⁸²Ibid., 416.

¹⁸³Ibid.

¹⁸⁴Ibid. (the text does not give an exact date, however it specifies within a few days of 15 January)

¹⁸⁵Taylor, USAF Historical Studies No. 86, 258.

enlisted men, each supporting Krueger's Army, individual Corps, Divisions, and independent regimental combat teams.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, four Air Liaison Parties were paired with four navy Joint Assault Signal Companies attached to each of the assault division in order to provide CAS.¹⁸⁷

During the amphibious landing phase at Lingayen Gulf, FEAF contributed 394 CAS sorties; of those, the majority were considered to be interdiction.¹⁸⁸ Although inter-service communication and de-confliction was difficult, the Lingayen landings were uneventful.¹⁸⁹ With the exception of two lone enemy aircraft that made a strafing run on the beach and the occasional unorganized *kamikaze*, little damage or casualties occurred during the landing.¹⁹⁰ Once 6th Army was established on the beaches at Lingayen Gulf, Kenney's forces focused on air interdiction and the residual air threats at Clark and positioned forces on Luzon. On 16 January, the 44 FS landed on the Lingayen airstrip, becoming the first squadron to operate out of Luzon since 1942.¹⁹¹

Securing the Central Plains and Manila Bay

As Allied forces drove south toward Manila, the FEAF took over all air cover responsibilities as Navy carriers maneuvered their way from the Philippines on 30

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 228-229.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 258.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 232.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 233.

¹⁹⁰United States Government, "Jap Air Power" *Impact* 3, no. 3 (March 1945): 36.

¹⁹¹William H. Starke, *Vampire Squadron, A History of the 44th Fighter Squadron in World War II, 1941-1945* (Anaheim, CA: Robinson Typographics, 1985), 152.

January.¹⁹² By mid February, 380 aircraft were on Luzon while the 310 BW was stationed in Mindoro. With an abundance of aircraft to support Krueger's drive south, CAS was predominately used by I Corps to include fifty-six CAS sorties against the well fortified Japanese in the Cabaruan Hills area.¹⁹³ As the 1st Cavalry Division drove south, her left flank, bordered by mountainous terrain, was protected by Kenney's fighters.¹⁹⁴ Some Army units including the XIV, located along the western axis south, "found little need for close air support;" but instead, requested reconnaissance and photography support along populated towns and cities.¹⁹⁵

MacArthur limited strafing and bombings of cities and roads, unless they were in direct support of ground commanders, as civilian casualties started to mount.¹⁹⁶ By 31 January, Krueger's forces seized the Clark Airfield complex sustaining 150 casualties. As Allied forces approached Manila, the FEAF was restricted from dropping bombs or supporting the ground commander inside Manila proper.¹⁹⁷

Meanwhile, MacArthur wanted his 8th Army to secure the Bataan peninsula to the west and open another front toward Manila, from the south. On 29 January, XI Corp landed on the Bataan-Zambales coast with little opposition from the enemy followed by 11th Airborne Division's landing on Nasugbu Bay. The 310 BW fighters "maintained a

¹⁹²Craven, 424.

¹⁹³Ibid., 421.

¹⁹⁴Smith, 656.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., 420.

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

¹⁹⁷Taylor, USAF Historical Studies No. 86, 245.

four-plane umbrella over the leading troops” of the 11th Airborne Division.¹⁹⁸ While Kenney’s fighters and light bombers supported the ground commanders, the TGs allowed the ground forces to seize terrain and maneuver very quickly around Luzon.

By January, Kenney positioned his cargo aircraft as far north as Dulag to as far south as Baik. Four groups were stationed at Biak: the 403rd, 374th, 375th, and 433rd.¹⁹⁹ The 317th, stationed on Dulag Airfield, supplied ground commanders on Luzon, Leyte, and Mindanao, along with Guerrilla forces. For the drive north toward Manila, the 317th TG supported the 511th Parachute Regiment drop on Tagaytay Ridge. The airdrop was a massive logistical undertaking—the 317th TG flew forty-eight C-47s dropping 915 troopers on the first wave, and fifty-one C-47s dropping 1,210 troopers on the second wave.²⁰⁰ Although the airdrop did not go as planned, the operation allowed the 511th to seize key terrain, allowing 11th Airborne Division to seize Manila from the South.²⁰¹ Although Kenney was severely restricted from striking the Japanese inside Manila, he was able to focus his efforts on Corregidor.

¹⁹⁸Smith, 235.

¹⁹⁹Maurer, Troop Carrier Groups 317th, 195-196; 403rd, 287-288; 374th, 261-262; 375th, 262-264; 433rd, 303-304.

²⁰⁰Smith, 227.

²⁰¹Ibid., 229.

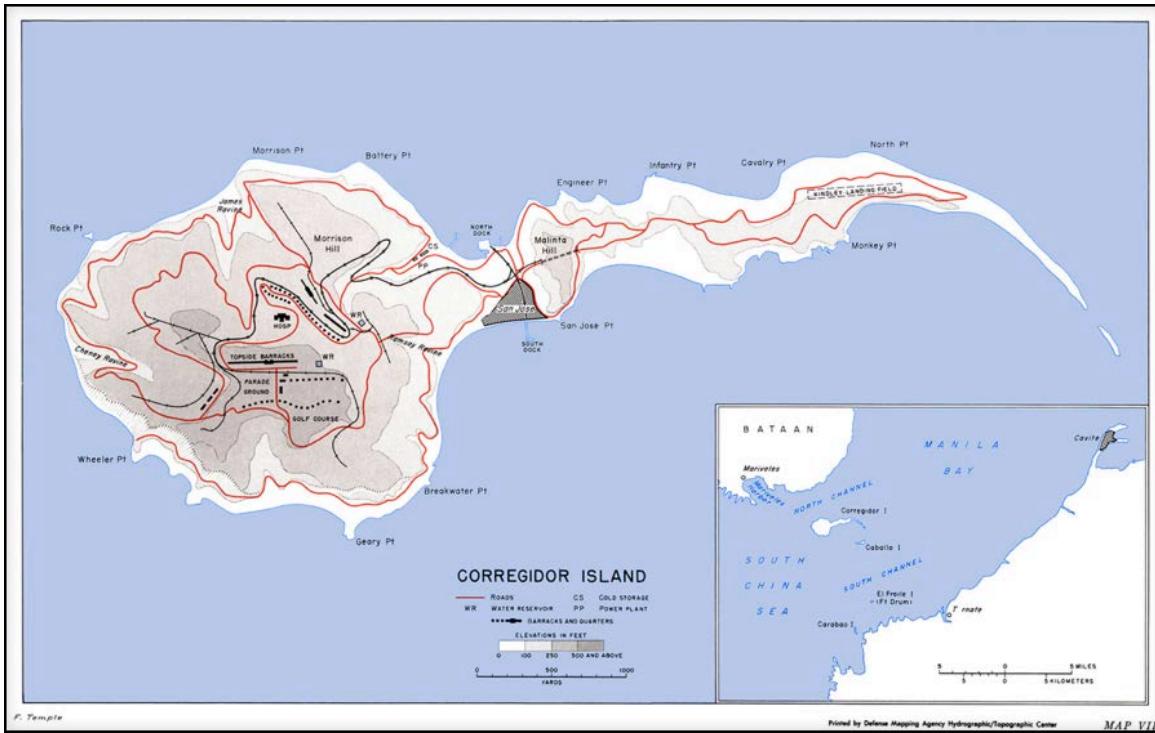


Figure 10. Corregidor Island

Source: Robert R. Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1993), 336, <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Triumph/USA-P-Triumph-18.html> (accessed 15 April 2014).

FEAF's operations on Corregidor are a perfect example of the support and attributes of air power while working with the ground commander. Corregidor, also known as "The Rock," is situated in the center of the entrance of Manila Bay. This was also the site where the last Allied troops on Luzon were holed up before they surrendered to the Japanese in 1942. Six thousand heavily defended Japanese were stationed on the tadpole shaped three-and-one-half by one-and-one-half mile island (figure 10).²⁰² Corregidor's seizure would allow control of LOCs in and out of Manila Bay. However,

²⁰²Rottman, 280.

assaulting Corregidor from the beaches was not ideal, because it was heavily fortified. MacArthur decided to airdrop the 503rd Parachute Regiment with the support of the 317th TG, led by Colonel John Lackey.²⁰³ The combined efforts of these two units are to be lauded. While stationed on Mindoro, both units lived and planned next to each other. 11th Airborne division company commanders flew with bomber crews scouting the drop zones.²⁰⁴ Beginning on 23 January and lasting until 16 February, Kenney's bombers flew 2,028 interdiction sorties against the fortified positions on the island dropping 3,163 tons of bombs.²⁰⁵

Beginning at daybreak on the morning of 16 February, twenty-four B-24s from 6,000 feet dropped 1,000 pound bombs on the fortified positions until 0759, followed by eleven B-25s flying low level targeting AAA positions. Thirty-one A-20s strafed defensive positions on Corregidor and nearby Caballo.²⁰⁶ At 0830, all bombing ceased while C-47s airdropping the 503rd. By 0930, the amphibious force and the airborne troopers united their efforts on Topside.²⁰⁷ Within two weeks, Corregidor was secured under the continuous cover of P-47s.²⁰⁸

²⁰³Harold Templeman, *The Return to Corregidor* (Harold Templeman, 1977).

²⁰⁴E. M. Flanagan, *Corregidor, the Rock Force Assault* (Novato CA: Presidio Press, 1988), 162-167.

²⁰⁵United States Government. "Recapture of Corregidor" *Impact* 3, no. 4 (April 1945), 26.

²⁰⁶The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan*, 68.

²⁰⁷Edward T. Imparato, *374th Troop Carrier Group* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1998), 95.

²⁰⁸Rottman, 280.

This fantastic operation was the end product of 30 months' development in the art of triphibious warfare. All the tools and specialist of air, ground, and naval forces were pooled together to turn a perfect job.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹United States Government, "The Return of the Rock," *Impact* 3, no. 9 (September/October 1945):, 18.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Primary Research Question

The primary research question was how effective the FEAF was in shaping and supporting ground operations in the retaking of the Philippines in 1944. If one was to isolate the Leyte operation at the beginning of the Philippine campaign, one could argue Kenney provided little support to the ground commander. At Leyte, Kenney's fighters struggled to maintain air superiority over the Central Philippines and dedicated very little CAS to Krueger's forces. In fact, no CAS support was flown until thirty-six days after the Army landing on Leyte.²¹⁰ Weather, limited airfields, and heavy Japanese air resistance all contributed to the limited number of allocated sorties dedicated to Krueger's forces.

However, if one isolated Kenney's efforts on Luzon, where air superiority was gained shortly after the landing in January 1945, then Krueger's forces received a surplus of fighters, bombers, and transports. With the exception of heavy bombers, Kenney dedicated a majority of his assets solely to the ground commander. But in answering the research question, Kenney's contributions must be investigated as they shaped the battlefield and provided direct and indirect support to the ground commander during the first six months of the Philippine campaign. This includes shaping operations, air interdiction, close air support, and transport missions.

With orders from MacArthur to prepare for the Philippines campaign, Kenney began shaping the operation by conducting a limited number of night snooper raids in

²¹⁰Krueger, 194.

early August in the vicinity of Davao, Mindanao. To include the surrounded airfields, Davao contained the largest concentration of Japanese aircraft closest to Allied airfields on New Guinea. By early September, Kenney's heavy bombers targeted airfields and tactical targets on Mindanao in broad daylight, meeting little resistance from the Japanese. These sorties continued for almost a week straight, until Halsey's carriers arrived in the vicinity of the Philippines. Days later, as Halsey's carriers raided Mindanao, Halsey concluded that air superiority was gained over the Southern Philippines and recommended MacArthur assault Leyte in October, two months ahead of schedule.

Shaping operations on Luzon were very similar on Leyte, with the exception of the proximity of Kenney's airfields. Taking off from Mindoro, less than ten miles from Luzon, Kenney's fighters were able to extend their loiter times and destroy more targets over Luzon. Besides kinetic operations, Kenney's reconnaissance sorties provided ground commanders the ability to assess enemy fortifications and plan future operations. Approximately thirty days after the amphibious landing on Mindoro, Kenney's forces gained complete air superiority over Luzon, thus enabling 5 AF to effectively support Krueger's 6th Army forces.

In January, Krueger directed Kenney's forces to isolate the enemy by destroying key infrastructure and LOCs within Luzon. Flying AI, Kenney's forces destroyed fifteen key bridges and a number of locomotives, thus indirectly isolating the enemy from reinforcing Japanese positions along the central plains and Manila. Weeks later, Krueger asked Kenney's forces to stop destroying bridges and locomotives unless these missions were in direct support of the ground commanders. The bombing was effective; however,

Krueger's forces depended on the LOCs just as much as the Japanese. At Corregidor, specifically, Kenney flew 2,028 interdiction sorties against enemy fortifications on the small island guarding Manila Bay, thus enabling the ground forces to secure Corregidor within two weeks.²¹¹ In Krueger's own words, "This [Corregidor] bombardment was highly effective and contributed greatly to the success of the airborne operation."²¹² Furthermore, the 1st Cavalry Division's left flank "in the drive to Manila" was protected only by Kenney's aircraft.²¹³ The 1st Cavalry's left flank was bordered by mountainous terrain and air power and was an effective means of protecting Krueger's forces without committing ground forces to the hazardous terrain.

Similar to the battles of Iwo Jima, Peleliu, and Okinawa, the Japanese dug in and fortified positions northeast of Manila, along the Shimbu Line. With no intentions to increase casualties, Krueger relied on what he called the "highly effective system of air-ground cooperation."²¹⁴ "The air personnel charged with a bombing mission were attached to the troops who would make the ground assault."²¹⁵ Then the following day, the same airmen conducted the bombing mission against the fortified positions. These arrangements were not the norm; however, Kenney's air support continued throughout the Philippines until the Japanese surrendered to Allied Forces on 15 August 1945,

²¹¹United States Government, "Recapture of Corregidor, *Impact* 3, no. 4 (April 1945): 26.

²¹²Krueger, 265.

²¹³Smith, 656.

²¹⁴Krueger, 293.

²¹⁵Smith, 651.

precipitated by the atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, as the official US Army History would describe, “Strategically, the issues in the Philippines had long since been decided. The principle strategic prize of the Philippines—the Central Plain–Manila Bay areas of Luzon—had been secure since early March, five and a half months before the end of the war.”²¹⁶

With Leyte secure and Luzon’s key terrain seized, the Philippine campaign was purely based on isolating Japanese defenses and attriting those starving forces with a highly effective air-ground system.

Close air support for the entire Philippine campaign started on the beaches of Leyte. The majority of CAS for the amphibious landings on Leyte and Luzon came from carrier aviation; all of the Leyte’s CAS is launched from Halsey’s carriers. Kenney’s CAS was extremely limited due to the small number of forward airfields and the substantial Japanese air threat. Luzon CAS allocation was significantly different. A week after the Lingayen Gulf landing, virtually no Japanese aircraft posed a threat to Allied forces. With air superiority over the Philippines, Kenney directed the three ATFs to each support one of MacArthur’s Corps.²¹⁷ Additionally, twelve SAPs, consisting of FEAF personnel integrated with ground forces, handed all CAS requests and coordination for the corps, divisions, and regimental combat teams within the ATFs. By March, Kenney provided the ground commander with 300 planes a day.²¹⁸ Superior joint firepower

²¹⁶Smith, 651.

²¹⁷Taylor, USAF Historical Studies No. 86, 258.

²¹⁸Kenney, 527.

enabled ground forces to seize terrain, but Kenney's troop carriers allowed the ground forces to maneuver around the AOR quickly.

C-47s from the 317 TG dropped members of the 511th Parachute Regiment along the Tagaytay Ridge, seized key terrain south of Manila, and opened another front against Manila. TGs continued to play a decisive role during the retaking of Corregidor, when members of 503rd Parachute Regiment airdropped on the heavily fortified island. Although the TGs supported other missions, the transports additionally flew in men and equipment to the forward edge of the battlefield, airdropping food and supplies to guerilla forces fighting the Japanese.

All of Kenney's aircraft were used in support of ground operations on Luzon.²¹⁹ Fighters, to include P-38s and P-47s that flew air combat sorties against Japanese fighters in late December, now flew CAS and AI sorties in January. Bombers focused less on enemy airfields and more on ground commander interdiction requests. "Sources disagree as to the exact figures, but more than 47,000 (out of 55,000) sorties on Luzon were flown in support of the ground troops."²²⁰ These sorties included but were not limited to close air support, air interdiction, and airdrop or airland.

Following their first meeting in the summer of 1942, Kenney bluntly told MacArthur that he would run the air war in the Southwest Pacific, and if his loyalty to

²¹⁹Joe G. Taylor, "American Experience in the Southwest Pacific," in *Case Studies in the Development of Close Air Support*, ed. Benjamin Franklin Cooling (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1990), 325.

²²⁰Taylor, USAF Historical Studies No. 86, 237.

MacArthur was ever in question, he would find a ticket back to the States himself.²²¹ This leadership cannot go unnoticed. Kenney took over the role as “MacArthur’s Airman,” in 1942, knowing he needed to gain the complete trust of his commander.²²² Later, reporters asked MacArthur in January 1943, “What is the Air Force doing today?” He responded, “I don’t know. Go ask General Kenney.”²²³

Kenney’s value in trust also flowed down to his commanders, pilots, and aircrews. Kenney’s ATF construct allowed commanders to operate independently, empowering individual airmen to defeat the Japanese. During the Philippine campaign, Kenney’s leadership continued to push the bomber line forward from airfields in Leyte to those in Mindoro and finally airfields on Clark.

On 28 April 1945, Kenney moved his entire FEAF headquarters, consisting of 1,200 airmen, to Fort McKinley by air.²²⁴ It is ironic that Fort McKinley was where the 27th BG initially arrived under Operation Plum on Thanksgiving, 20 November 1941, with no assigned aircraft. In 1941, the FEAF’s mission was to deter Japanese aggression and be prepared to conduct offensive operations against Japan if deterrence failed. By 1944, the FEAF’s mission was to destroy Japanese forces on the Philippines and isolate other forces in the vicinity of Southeast Asia.

²²¹Bruce Gamble, *Fortress Rabaul: The Battle for the Southwest Pacific, January 1942-April 1943* (Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press, 2010), 206.

²²²The term “MacArthur’s Airman” is referenced and used from the book by Thomas E. Griffith Jr., *MacArthur’s Airman* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

²²³Kenney, 184.

²²⁴Ibid., 542.

Following the war, US forces continued to operate out of the Philippines. These installations were instrumental during the Cold War and the Vietnam War, acting as a key logistical hub and forward tactical air base. In 1991, Clark Air Base closed, followed by Subic Bay in 1992 after US-Philippine government relations deteriorated. Today, only a small air mobility detachment remains on Clark, along with a small number of special operations personnel on Mindanao, in support of the Global War on Terror.

Secondary Research Question

Today, remnants of the FEAF can be found in the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), stationed at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Air Field, Hawaii. Their primary area of responsibility spans the Pacific Ocean from the Western United States to Southern Asia, including India and Australia. What lessons did the FEAF learn as they conducted offensive operations in the Southwest Pacific, and are they still relevant today?

First, the Pacific AOR still has the same logistical and operational challenges to land-based aircraft and military operations, much like in 1944. Vast distances of ocean separate a small number of landmasses. Diplomatically, the Far East contains five of the seven standing bilateral defense treaties between the United States and Korea, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia.

PACAF's overseas forces are currently located in Korea and Japan. Additionally, bombers are temporarily rotated from the states to Anderson AB, Guam, while Kadena AB, Okinawa houses the largest combat wing in the Air Force. The defense of these airfields, both militarily and politically, is a requirement if the United States is going to project military power in Asia. Airpower is still an effective means of deterrence.

Technology has greatly increased the range of land-based aircraft; B-2s, B-52s, and B-1s operating from the continental United States or Guam can strike any target in the PACAF AOR. Tactical fighters, however, are still heavily dependent on tankers for their air refueling. Additionally, without tanker support, command and control, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (C2ISR) platforms, and mobility aircraft are limited on range and loiter times.

Second, Kenney's command and control greatly enhanced joint operations in the Southwest Pacific. The ATF construct continues to be refined; however, allowing commanders and aircrews to make decentralized decisions builds trust and permits commanders to seize the tactical and operational advantage. In addition, limited landmasses in the Pacific require putting a large number of joint forces together within a restrained space. Unity of effort and close tactical coordination will continue to be required and refined.

The Philippine campaign is a perfect example of the complexities of a joint force working within a confined AOR. The campaign was a joint endeavor in which all services supported the Joint Force Commander, MacArthur. Leading up to the Philippines, ground forces supported the air campaign by seizing key terrain, building airfields and advancing the bomber line. Once air superiority was gained, both naval and land-based air forces supported the ground commander with CAS and AI. At the tactical level, Kenney's forces fully synchronized air power with the ground scheme of maneuver by integrating SAPs and TGs within the Army's command elements. Although the Pacific AOR is covered by almost 50 percent of the world's ocean surface, dominated by

Navy forces, the Philippine campaign of 1944-45, reexamined, provides a limitless amount of historical data that supports continued air and ground integration.

TIMELINE

1941

8 Dec Japanese attack the Philippines
15 Dec Remaining B-17s ordered to Australia

1942

11 Mar General MacArthur escapes to Australia
7 May General Wainwright broadcasts surrender instructions

1944

26-28 Jul Pearl Harbor Conference attended by Roosevelt, MacArthur, and Nimitz
1 Sept First daylight bombing of the Philippines since 1942.
20 Oct Amphibious landings on Leyte
27 Oct 49th Fighter Group lands on Leyte
15 Dec Mindoro amphibious landing

1945

9 Jan Lingayen Gulf landings
29 Jan Operations against Manila
16 Feb Airdrop over Corregidor
3 Mar Manila secured
6 Aug Dropping of Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima
9 Aug Dropping of Atomic Bomb on Nagasaki
15 Aug Emperor broadcasts termination of the war
2 Sep Official surrender of the Empire of Japan on the USS Missouri

GLOSSARY

Airdrop. “The unloading of personnel or materiel from aircraft in flight.”²²⁵

Air Interdiction. “Air operations conducted to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy’s military surface capabilities before it can be brought to bear effectively against friendly forces, or to otherwise achieve objectives that are conducted at such distances from friendly forces that detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of friendly forces is not required.”²²⁶

Air land operation. “An operation involving movement by air with a designated destination for further ground deployment of units and personnel and/or further ground distribution of supplies.”²²⁷

Air Movement. “Air transport of units, personnel, supplies, and equipment including airdrops and air landings.”²²⁸

Air Superiority. “That degree of dominance in the air battle by one force that permits the conduct of its operations at a given time and place without prohibitive interference from air and missile threats.”²²⁹

Close Air Support. “Air action by fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces and that require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces.”²³⁰

Counterair. “A mission that integrates offensive and defensive operations to attain and maintain a desired degree of air superiority and protection by neutralizing or destroying enemy aircraft and missiles, both before and after launch.”²³¹

²²⁵United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*, GL-6.

²²⁶United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-03, *Joint Interdiction*, GL-4.

²²⁷United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-17, GL-6.

²²⁸Ibid., GL-7.

²²⁹United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats*, GL-8.

²³⁰United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, GL-6-7.

Counterland. “Air and space operations against the enemy land force capabilities to create effects that achieve joint force commander objectives.”²³² “Counterland operations are supported by two types of air operations for engaging enemy land forces, Air Interdiction (AI) and Close Air Support (CAS).”²³³

Fighter Escort. “An offensive counterair operation providing dedicated protection sorties by air-to-air capable fighters in support of other offensive air and air support missions over enemy territory, or in a defensive counterair role to protect high value airborne assets.”²³⁴

Fighter Sweep. “An offensive mission by fighter aircraft to seek out and destroy enemy aircraft or targets of opportunity in a designated area.”²³⁵

Suppression. “Temporary or transient degradation by an opposing force of the performance of a weapons system below the level needed to fulfill its mission objectives.”²³⁶

²³¹United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-01, GL-10.

²³²United States Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-03, GL-4.

²³³United States Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document 3-03, *Counterland Operations* (Lemay Center, Maxwell AFB, AL, 2011), 5.

²³⁴United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-01, GL-11.

²³⁵Ibid.

²³⁶Ibid., GL-16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Bartsch, William H. *Doomed at the Start, American Pursuit Pilots in the Philippines, 1941-1942*. College Station, TX: Texas A &M University Press, 1992.

Boggs, Charles W. Jr. *Marine Aviation in the Philippines*, Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1951.

Boyne, Walter J. *Clash of Wings, World War II in the Air*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.

Bradley, John, Jack Dice, and Thomas Griess. *The Second World War: Asia and the Pacific*. West Point, NY: Department of History, United States Military Academy, 1989.

Cannon M. H. *United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific, Letye: The Return to the Philippines*. Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1993. <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Return/maps/USA-P-Return-1.jpg> (accessed 15 April 2014).

Carter, Kit, and Robert Mueller. *U.S. Army Air Forces in World War II: Combat Chronology 1941-1945*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1973.

Craven, William, and James L. Cate. *The Army Air Forces in World War II, vol. IV; The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944*. London: The University of Chicago Press, 1950. <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/AAF/IV/maps/AAF-IV-27.jpg> (accessed 15 April 2014.)

———. *The Army Air Forces in World War II, Vol. V; The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki June 1944 to August 1945*. London: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

Flanagan, E. M. *Corregidor, the Rock Force Assault*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988.

Gamble, Bruce. *Fortress Rabaul: The Battle for the Southwest Pacific, January 1942-April 1943*. Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press, 2010.

Griffith, Thomas E. Jr. *MacArthur's Airman*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

Harrison, Mark. *The Economics of World War II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Hayashi, Saburo, and Alvin D. Coox. *Kogun*. Quantico, VA: The Marine Corps Association, 1959.

Imparato, Edward. *374th Troop Carrier Group*. Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1998.

Jane's All the World's Aircraft 1943/4. New York: Macmillan Company, 1944.

Keegan, John. *The Second World War*. New York: Penguin Group, 1989.

Kenney, George C. USAF Warrior Studies, *General Kenney Reports*. Washington, DC: Office of the Air Force History, 1987.

King, Earnest. *U.S. Navy at War, 1941-1945*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946.

Krueger, Walter. *From Down Under to Nippon*. Washington, DC: Combat Forces Press, 1953.

Luvaas, Jay. *Dear Miss Em, General Eichelberger's War in the Pacific, 1942-1945*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972.

MacArthur, Douglas. *Reminiscences*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001.

Martin, Adrian R., and Larry W. Stephenson. *Operation Plum*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008.

Maurer, Maurer. *Air Force Combat Units of World War II*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961.

Miller, Edward S. *War Plan ORANGE*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1991.

Morison, Samuel E. *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. 13, The Liberation of the Philippines, Luzon, Mindanao, The Visayas, 1944-1945*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1959.

Morton, Louis. *United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific, The Fall of the Philippines*. 50th Anniversary Commemorative ed. Minnetonka, MN: National Historical Society, 1995.

Murphy, James T., and A. B. Feuer. *Skip Bombing*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1993.

Palmer, Robert, Wiley Bell, and William R. Keast. *United States Army in World War II, The Army Ground Forces, The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*. Washington, DC: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1948.

Perret, Geoffrey. *Winged Victory, The Army Air Forces in World War II*. New York: Random House, 1993.

Potter, E. B. *Bull Halsey*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1985.

———. *Nimitz*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1976.

Rottman, Gordon L. *World War II Pacific Island Guide, A Geo-Military Study*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.

Stanaway, John, and Bob Rocker. *The Eight Ballers: Eyes of the Fifth Air Force, The 8th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron in World War II*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 1999.

Starke, William H. *Vampire Squadron, A History of the 44th Fighter Squadron in World War II, 1941-1945*. Anaheim, CA: Robinson Typographics, 1985.

Stern, Robert C. *Fire From the Sky*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010.

Taylor, Joe G. “American Experience in the Southwest Pacific.” In *Case Studies in the Development of Close Air Support*, edited by Benjamin Franklin Cooling. Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1990.

United States Military Academy. *The War with Japan Part 1, December 1941 to August 1942*. West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, 1950.

Vego, Milan. *The Battle for Leyte, 1944 Allied and Japanese Plans, Preparations, and Execution*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006.

Willmott, H. P. *Empires in the Pacific Balance, Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies to April 1942*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989.

Y'Blood, William T. *Red Storm Setting, the Battle of the Philippine Sea*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1981.

Government Documents

Angelella, Salvatore A. “A Prototype JFACC: General George C. Kenney.” Masters Thesis, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, June 1994.

Boyan, Bernard. USAF Historical Studies No. 136, “The Role of the Escort Fighter.” Air Force Historical Library. <http://www.afhra.af.mil/studies/numberedusafhistoricalstudies101-150.asp> (accessed 22 February 2014)

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.

———. Joint Publication (JP) 3-01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

———. Joint Publication (JP) 3-03, *Joint Interdiction*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011.

———. Joint Publication (JP) 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013.

Commander, Third Amphibious Force, CTF 79, *Report of Leyte Operation, Philippine Islands: Enclosure C*, 13 November 1944.

Headquarters, United States Air Force. Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 3-03, *Counterland Operations*. Maxwell AFB, AL, Lemay Center, 2011.

Reither, Joseph. USAF Historical Studies No. 13, “The Development of Tactical Doctrines at AAFSAT (Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics) and AAFTAC (Army Air Forces Tactical Center).” Air Force Historical Library, <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090602-037.pdf> (accessed 21 February 2014).

Taylor, Joe G. USAF Historical Studies No. 86, “Close Air Support in the War Against Japan.” Air Force Historical Library. <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090601-123.pdf> (accessed 22 February 2014).

———. USAF Historical Studies No. 92, “Development of Night Air Operations, 1941-1952.” Air Force Historical Library. <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090602-012.pdf> (accessed 22 February 2014).

United States Army. *Reports of General MacArthur, The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific, Volume I*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1966. <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/MacArthur%20Reports/MacArthur%20V1/ch07.htm> (accessed 15 April 2014).

———. *Report of General MacArthur, Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1966.

United States Army Air Forces. *The 5th Over the Southwest Pacific*. Los Angeles: AAF Publications Company.

United States Strategic Bombing Survey. *The Fifth Air Force in the War Against Japan*. Washington, DC: Military Analysis Division, 1947.

———. *The Thirteenth Air Force in the War Against Japan*. Washington, DC: Military Analysis Division, 1947.

Weeks, John A. “Study of the Military Geography of the Philippine Islands and the Most Suitable Beach-Head and the Route of Advance to the Vital Area for an Overseas Expedition.” Research Paper, The Command and General Staff School, 1931. <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll14/id/727> (accessed 3 November 2013).

Periodicals

Artic, Desert, and Tropic Information Center. "The Philippines, Their Day of Liberation is Not Far Off." *Air Force Journal*, October, 1944, <http://www.afhso.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110420-030.pdf>, (accessed 18 January 2014).

Johansen, Herbert O. "Back to the Philippines Part 1: The GI's Come Through." *Air Force Journal*, December 1944. <http://www.afhso.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110420-030.pdf>, (accessed 18 January 2014).

Herbert O. Johansen. "Back to the Philippines Part 1: The GI's Come Through." *Air Force Journal*, 1944. <http://www.afhso.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110420-030.pdf> (accessed 18 January 2014).

Office of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff Intelligence. "Balikpapan Oil fields." *Impact* 3, no. 9 (1944).

——— "FEAF in the Philippines Campaign." *Impact* 3, no. 3 (1945).

——— "First Heavy Bomber Strike." *Impact* 2, no. 9 (1944).

———. "Jap Air Power" *Impact* 3, no. 3 (1945).

———. "Recapture of Corregidor." *Impact* 3, no. 4 (1945).

———. "The Return of the Rock." *Impact* 3, no. 9 (1945).

Internet Sources

Dow, G. Wayne. Our Family Treasury: Unit History of the 27th Bombardment Group (Light) U.S. Army Air Corps World War II, 1 January 1940-1 September 1942. <http://lindadow.net/pdffiles/bombgpli.pdf> (accessed 10 February 2014).

Unpublished Sources

Templeman, Harold. The Return to Corregidor, 1977.